OUR WORLD;

OR,

THE DEMOCRAT'S RULE.

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OR,

THE DEMOCRAT'S RULE.

BY

JUSTIA, A KNOWNOTHING,

AUTHOR OF ETC. ETC. ETC.

' An honest tale speeds best being plainly told."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

Two years have nearly elapsed since we laid aside the manuscript of this history, for the purpose of preparing a work since given to our readers on both sides of the Atlantic; and for whose kind favours we beg leave to return our only tribute—an humble measure of thanks. In presenting this work to the public we may be permitted to say, that we are fully conscious of the grave charges of misrepresenting society, and misconstruing facts, which will be laid at our door by our friends of the South, and its very peculiar institution; but earnestly do we enjoin all such champions of "things as they are" to read and well digest what we have set before them, ere they consign us to the Siberia of fiction writers. We plead not so much against any particular institution of our country as against the maladministration of power when wielded by a certain political party. There are those who say we "know not the true workings of slavery

and democracy;" to such we would answer, perhaps there is truth in the assertion, for not too much would we plume ourselves on the miseries of the one and perversions of the other. With these brief remarks, enough for any modern preface, do we submit the present work to the unbiassed reader.

THE AUTHOR.

February 1855.

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OUR WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

MARSTON'S PLANTATION.

On the left bank of the Ashly River, in the State of South Carolina, and a few miles from its principal city, is a plantation once the property of Hugh Marston. It was near this spot, the brave Huguenots, fleeing religious and political persecution, founded their first American colony—invoked Heaven to guard their liberties—sought a refuge in a new world! And it was here the pious Huguenot forgot his appeals to high heaven—forgot what had driven him from his fatherland, and (unlike the pilgrim fathers who planted their standard on "New England's happy shore,") became the first to oppress. It was here, against a fierce tyranny, the gallant *Yamassee*,* loyal to his professed friend, struggled and died for his liberty. It was here the last remnant of his tribe fought the fierce battle of right over might! It was here, in this domain, destined to be the great and powerful of nations—the

* A tribe of faithful and heroic Indians.

asylum of an old world's shelter seeking poor, and the proud embodiment of a people's sovereignty,—liberty was first betrayed! It was here men deceived themselves, and freedom proclaimers became freedom destroyers. And, too, it was here Spanish cupidity, murderous in its search for gold, turned a deaf ear to humanity's cries, slaughtered the friendly Indian, and drenched the soil with his innocent blood. And it is here, at this moment, slavery—(fierce monster, threatening the peace of a happy people)—runs riot in all its savage vicissitudes, denying man his commonest birthright.

If history did but record the barbarous scenes yet enacted on the banks of this lovely stream, the contrast with its calm surface sweeping gently onward to mingle its waters with the great deep, would be strange indeed. How mellowed by the calm beauty of a summer evening, the one!—how stained with scenes of misery, torment, and death, the other!

Let us beg the reader to follow us back to the time when Marston is found in possession of the plantation, and view it as it is when his friends gather round him to enjoy his bounteous hospitality.

We have ascended the Ashly on a bright spring morning, and are at a jut covered with dark jungle, where the river, about twenty rods wide, sweeps slowly round;—flowering brakes, waving their tops to and fro in the breeze, bedeck the river banks, and far in the distance, on the left, opens the broad area of the plantation. As we near it, a beautifully undulating slope presents itself, bounded on its upper edge by a long line of sombre-looking pines. Again we emerge beneath clustering foliage overhanging the river;

and from out this—sovereign of a southern clime—the wild azalia and fair magnolia diffuse their fragrance to perfume the air. From the pine ridge the slope recedes till it reaches a line of jungle, or hedge, that separates it from the marshy bottom, extending to the river, against which it is protected by a dyke. Most of the slope is under a high state of cultivation, and on its upper edge is a newly cleared patch of ground, which negroes are preparing for the cotton-seed.

Smoking piles burn here and there, burned stumps and trees point their black peaks upward in the murky atmosphere, half-clad negroes in coarse osnaburgs are busy among the smoke and fire: the scene presents a smouldering volcano inhabited by semi-devils. Among the sombre denizens are women, their only clothing being osnaburg frocks, made loose at the necks and tied about the waist with a string: with hoes they work upon the "top surface," gather charred wood into piles, and waddle along as if time were a drug upon life.

Far away to the right the young corn shoots its green sprouts in a square plat, where a few negroes are quietly engaged at the first hoeing. Being tasked, they work with system, and expect, if they never receive, a share of the fruits. All love and respect Marston, for he is generous and kind to them; but system in business is at variance with his nature. His overseer, however, is just the reverse: he is a sharp fellow, has an unbending will, is proud of his office, and has long been reckoned among the very best in the county. Full well he knows what sort of negro makes the best driver; and where nature is ignorant of itself, the accomplishment is valuable. That he watches

Marston's welfare, no one doubts; that he never forgets his own, is equally certain From near mid-distance of the slope we see him approaching on a bay-coloured horse. The sun's rays are fiercely hot, and, though his features are browned and haggard, he holds a huge umbrella in one hand and the inseparable whip in the other. The former is his protector; the latter, his sceptre. John Ryan, for such is his name, is a tall, athletic man, whose very look excites terror. Some say he was born in Limerick, on the Emerald Isle, and only left it because his proud spirit would not succumb to the unbending rod England held over his poor bleeding country.

Running along the centre of the slope is a line of cotton-fields, in which the young plants, sickly in spots, have reached a stage when they require much nursing. Among them are men, women, and children, crouched on the ground like so many sable spectres, picking and pulling at the roots to give them strength. John Ryan has been keeping a sharp eye on them. He will salute you with an air of independence, tell you how he hated oppression and loved freedom, and how, at the present day, he is a great democrat. Now, whether John left his country for his country's good, is a question; but certain it is he dearly delights to ply the lash,—to whip mankind merely for amusement's sake. In a word, John has a good Irish heart within him, and he always lays particular emphasis on the *good*, when he tells us of its qualities; but let us rather charge to the State that spare use he makes of its gentler parts.

John Ryan, his face indicating tyranny stereotyped, has just been placing drivers over each gang of workmen. How

careful he was to select a trustworthy negro, whose vanity he has excited, and who views his position as dearly important. Our driver not unfrequently is the monster tyrant of his circle; but whether from inclination to serve the interests of his master, or a knowledge of the fierce system that holds him alike abject, we know not. At times he is more than obedient to his master's will.

Excuse, reader, this distant view of the plantation at early spring, and follow us back to the Ashly. Here we will still continue along the river-bank, pass borders of thick jungle, flowering vines, and rows of stately pines, their tops moaning in the wind,—and soon find we have reached Marston's landing. This is situated at the termination of an elevated plat extending from thence to the mansion, nearly a mile distant. Three negroes lay basking on the bank; they were sent to wait our coming. Tonio! Murel! Pompe!—they ejaculate, calling one another, as we surprise them. They are cheerful and polite, are dressed in striped shirts and trousers, receive us with great suavity of manner, present master's compliments, tell us with an air of welcome that master will be "right glad" to see us, and conclude by making sundry inquiries about our passage and our "Missuses." Pompe, the "most important nigger" of the three, expresses great solicitude lest we get our feet in the mud. Black as Afric's purest, and with a face of great good nature, Pompe, in curious jargon, apologises for the bad state of the landing, tells us he often reminds Mas'r how necessary it is to have it look genteel. Pompe, more than master, is deeply concerned lest the dignity of the plantation suffer.

Planks and slabs are lain from the water's edge to the

high ground on the ridge, upon which we ascend to the crown, a piece of natural soil rising into a beautiful convex of about six rods wide, extending to the garden gate. We wend our way to the mansion, leaving Pompe and his assistants in charge of our luggage, which they will see safely landed. The ridge forms a level walk, sequestered by long lines of huge oaks, their massive branches forming an arch of foliage, with long trailing moss hanging like mourning drapery to enhance its rural beauty. At the extreme of this festooned walk the mansion is seen dwindling into an almost imperceptible perspective. There is something grand and impressive in the still arch above us—something which revives our sense of the beauty of nature. Through the trunks of the trees, on our right and left, extensive rice fields are seen stretching far into the distance. The young blades are shooting above the surface of the water, giving it the appearance of a frozen sheet clothed with green, and protected from the river by a serpentine embankment. How beautiful the expanse viewed from beneath these hoary-headed oaks!

On the surface and along the banks of the river aligators are sporting; moccason snakes twist their way along, and scouring kingfishers croak in the balmy air. If a venerable rattlesnake warn us we need not fear—being an honourable snake (partaking of the old southerner's affected chivalry)—he will not approach disguised;—no! he will politely give us warning. But we have emerged from the mossy walk and reached a slab fence, dilapidated and broken, which encloses an area of an acre of ground, in the centre of which stands the mansion: the area seems to have been a garden, which, in former days, may have been cultivated

with great care. At present it only presents a few beds rank with weeds. We are told the gardener has been dismissed in consideration of his more lucrative services in the corn-field. That the place is not entirely neglected, we have only to add that Marston's hogs are exercising an independent right to till the soil according to their own system. The mansion is a quadrangular building, about sixty feet long by fifty wide, built of wood, two stories high, having upper and lower verandas.

We pass the dilapidated gate, and reach it by a narrow passage through the garden, on each side of which is a piece of antique statuary, broken and defaced. Entering the lower veranda, we pace the quadrangle, viewing innumerable cuttings and carvings upon the posts: they are initials and full names, cut to please the vanity of those anxious to leave the Marston family a memento. Again we arrive at the back of the mansion where the quadrangle opens a courtyard filled with broken vines, blackened cedars, and venerable-looking leaks;—they were once much valued by the ancient and very respectable Marston family. A few yards from the left wing of the mansion are the "yard houses"—little, comely cabins, about twelve feet by twenty, and proportionately high. One is the kitchen: it has a dingy look, the smoke issuing from its chinks regardless of the chimney; while from its door, sable denizens, ragged and greasy, and straining their curious faces, issue forth. The polished black cook, with her ample portions, is foaming with excitement, lest the feast she is preparing for master's guests may fail to sustain her celebrity. Conspicuous among these cabins are two presenting a much neater appearance: they are brightly whitewashed, and the

little windows are decorated with flowering plants. Within them there is an air of simple neatness and freshness we have seldom seen surpassed; the meagre furniture seems to have been arranged by some careful hand, and presents an air of cheerfulness in strange contrast with the dingy cabins around. In each there is a neatly arranged bed, spread over with a white cover, and by its side a piece of soft carpet. It is from these we shall draw forth the principal characters of our story.

Upon a brick foundation, about twenty rods from the right wing of the mansion, stands a wood cottage, occupied by the overseer. Mr. John Ryan not being blessed with a family, when Marston is not honoured with company takes his meals at the mansion. In the distance, to the left, is seen a long line of humble huts, standing upon piles, and occupied by promiscuous negro families:—we say promiscuous, for the marriage-tie is of little value to the master, nor does it give forth specific claim to parentage. The sable occupants are beings of uncertainty; their toil is for a life-time—a weary waste of hope and disappointment. Yes! their dreary life is a heritage, the conditions of which no man would share willingly. Victors of husbandry, they share not of the spoils; nor is the sweat of their brows repaid with justice.

Near these cabins, mere specks in the distance, are two large sheds, under which are primitive mills, wherein negroes grind corn for their humble meal. Returning from the field at night, hungry and fatigued, he who gets a turn at the mill first is the luckiest fellow. Now that the workpeople are busily engaged on the plantation, the cabins are in charge of two nurses, matronly-looking old

bodies, who are vainly endeavouring to keep in order numerous growing specimens of the race too young to destroy a grub at the root of a cotton plant. The task is indeed a difficult one, they being as unruly as an excited Congress. They gambol round the door, make pert faces at old mamma, and seem as happy as snakes in the spring sun. Some are in a nude state, others have bits of frocks covering hapless portions of their bodies; they are imps of mischief personified, yet our heart bounds with sympathy for them. Alive with comicality, they move us, almost unconsciously, to fondle them. And yet we know not why we would fondle the sable "rascals." One knot is larking on the grass, running, toddling, yelling, and hooting; another, ankle-deep in mud, clench together and roll among the ducks, work their clawy fingers through the tufts of each other's crispy hair, and enjoy their childish sports with an air of genial happiness; while a third sit in a circle beside an oak tree playing with "Dash," whose tail they pull without stint. "Dash" is the faithful and favourite dog; he rather likes a saucy young "nigger," and, while feeling himself equal to the very best in the clan, will permit the small fry, without resenting the injury, to pull his tail.

It being "ration day," we must describe the serving, that being an interesting phase of plantation life. Negroes have gathered into motley groups around two weather-beaten store-houses (the overseer has retired to his apartment) when they wait the signal from the head driver, who figures as master of ceremonies. One sings:—

"Jim Crack corn, an' I don't care,
Fo'h mas'r's gone away! way! way!"

Another is croaking over the time he saved on his task,

a third is trying to play a trick with tho driver (come the possum over him), and a third unfolds the scheme by which the *extra* for whiskey and molasses was raised. Presenting a sable *pot pourri*, they jibber and croak among themselves, laugh and whistle, go through the antics of the " break-down " dance, make the very air echo with the music of their incomprehensible jargon. We are well nigh deafened by it, and yet it excites our joy. We are amused and instructed; we laugh because they laugh, our feelings vibrate with theirs, their quaint humour forces itself into our very soul, and our sympathy glows with their happy anticipations. The philosophy of their jargon is catching to our senses; we listen that we may know their natures, and learn good from their simplicity. He is a strange mortal who cannot learn something from a fool!

The happy moment has arrived: "Ho, boys!" is sounded,—the doors open, the negroes stop their antics and their jargon; stores are exposed, and with one dinning mutter all press into a half-circle at tho doors, in one of which stands the huge figure of Balam, the head driver. He gives a scanning look at the circle of anxious faces; he would have us think the importance of the plantation centred in his glowing black face. There he stands—a measure in his hand—while another driver, with an air of less dignity, cries out, with a stentorian voice, the names of the heads of families, and the number of children belonging thereto. Thus, one by one, the name being announced in muddled accents, they step forward, and receive their corn, or rice, as may be. In pans and pails they receive it, pass it to the younger members of the family; with running and scampering, they carry the coarse

allotment to their cabin with seeming cheerfulness. Marston, esteemed a good master, always gives bacon, and to receive this the negroes will gather round the store a second time. In this, the all-fascinating bacon is concealed, for which the children evince more concern; their eyes begin to shine brighter, their watchfulness becomes more intent. Presently a negro begins to withdraw the meat, and as he commences action the jargon gets louder, until we are deafened, and would fain move beyond it. Just then, the important driver, with hand extended, commands, —"Order!" at the very top of his loud voice. All is again still; the man returns to his duty. The meat is somewhat oily and rancid, but Balam cuts it as if it were choice and scarce. Another driver weighs it in a pair of scales he holds in his hands; while still another, cutting the same as before, throws it upon some chaff at the door, as if it were a bone thrown to a hungry dog. How humbly the recipient picks it up and carries it to his or her cabin! Not unfrequently the young "imps" will scramble for it, string it upon skewers, and with great nonchalance throw it over their shoulders, and walk off. If it bathe their backs with grease so much more the comfort. Those little necessaries which add so much to the negro's comfort, and of which he is so fond, must be purchased with the result of his extra energy. Even this allowance may serve the boasted hospitality; but the impression that there is a pennyworth of generosity for every pound of parsimony, forces itself upon us. On his little spot, by moonlight or starlight, the negro must cultivate for himself, that his family may enjoy a few of those fruits of which Master has many. How miserable is

the man without a spark of generosity in his soul; and how much more miserable the man who will not return good for good's worth! To the negro, kindness is a mite inspiring the impulses of a simple heart, and bringing forth great good.

Let us again beg the reader to return with us to those conspicuous cottages near the court-yard, and in which we will find several of our characters.

We cross the threshold of one, and are accosted by a female who, speaking in musical accents, invites us to sit down. She has none of Afric's blood in her veins;—no! her features are beautifully olive, and the intonation of her voice discovers a different origin. Her figure is tall and well-formed; she has delicately-formed hands and feet, long, tapering fingers, well-rounded limbs, and an oval face, shaded with melancholy. How reserved she seems, and yet how quickly she moves her graceful figure! Now she places her right hand upon her finely-arched forehead, parts the heavy folds of glossy hair that hang carelessly over her brown shoulders, and with a half-suppressed smile answers our salutation. We are welcome in her humble cabin; but her dark, languishing eyes, so full of intensity, watch us with irresistible suspicion. They are the symbols of her inward soul; they speak through that melancholy pervading her countenance! The deep purple of her cheek is softened by it, while it adds to her face that calm beauty which moves the gentle of our nature. How like a woman born to fill a loftier sphere than that to which a cruel law subjects her, she seems!

Neither a field nor a house servant, the uninitiated may be at a loss to know what sphere on the plantation is her's?

She is the mother of Annette, a little girl of remarkable beauty, sitting at her side, playing with her left hand. Annette is fair, has light auburn hair—not the first tinge of her mother's olive invades her features. Her little cheerful face is lit up with a smile, and while toying with the rings on her mother's fingers, asks questions that person does not seem inclined to answer. Vivacious and sprightly, she chatters and lisps until we become eager for her history. "It's only a child's history," some would say. But the mother displays so much fondness for it; and yet we become more and more excited by the strange manner in which she tries to suppress an outward display of her feelings. At times she pats it gently on the head, runs her hands through its hair, and twists the ends into tiny ringlets.

In the next cabin we meet the shortish figure of a tawny female, whose Indian features stand boldly out. Her high cheek bones, long glossy black hair, and flashing eyes, are the indexes of her pedigree. "My master says I am a slave:" in broken accents she answers our question. As she sits in her chair near the fire-place of bricks, a male issue of the mixed blood toddles round and round her, tossing her long coarse hair every time he passes her back. The little boy is much fairer than the brawny daughter who seems his mother. Playful, and even mischievous, he delights in pulling the hair which curls over his head; and when the woman calls him he answers with a childish heedlessness, and runs for the door. Reader! this woman's name is Ellen Juvarna; she has youth on her side, and though she retains the name of her ancient sire, is proud of being master's mistress. She tells us how comfortable she is: how Nicholas, for such is his name, resembles his father,

how he loves him, but how he fails to acknowledge him. A feud, with its consequences, is kept up between the two cabins; and while she makes many insinuations about her rival, tells us she knows her features have few charms. Meanwhile, she assures us that neither good looks nor sweet smiles make good mothers. "Nicholas!" she exclaims, "come here; the gentlemen want to know all about papa." And, as she extends her hand, the child answers the summons, runs across the room, fondles his head in his mother's lap,—seems ashamed!

CHAPTER II.

HOW A NIGHT WAS SPENT ON MARSTON'S PLANTATION.

EARTH is mantled with richest verdure; far away to the west and south of the mansion the scene stretches out in calm grandeur. The sun sinks beneath glowing clouds that crimson the horizon and spread refulgent shadows on the distant hills, as darkness slowly steals its way on the mellow landscape.

Motley groups of negroes are returned from the field, fires are lighted in and about the cabins, and men mutter their curious jargon while moving to prepare the coarse meal. Their anxious countenances form a picture wild and deeply interesting.

Entering Marston's mansion, we find its interior neater than its weather-stained and paintless sides portended. Through the centre runs a broad passage, and on the left and right are large parlours, comfortably furnished, divided by folding doors of carved walnut. We are ushered into the one on the right by a yellow-servant, who, neatly dressed in black, has prepared his politeness for the occasion. With great suavity, accompanied by a figurative grin, he informs us that master will pay his respects presently. Pieces of singularly antique furniture are arranged round the room, of which, he adds, master is proud indeed. Two plaster figures, standing in dingy

niches, he tells us are wonders of the white man's genius. In his own random style he gives us an essay on the arts, adding a word here and there to remind us of Master's exquisite taste, and anxiously waits our confirmation of what he says.

A large open fire-place, with fancifully carved frame-work and mantel-pieces, in Italian marble of polished blackness, upon which stood massive silver candlesticks, in chased work, denotes the ancient character of the mansion. It has many years been the home of the ever-hospitable Marston family.

In another part of the room is a mahogany side-board of antique pattern, upon which stand sundry bottles and glasses, indicative of Marston having entertained company in the morning. While we are contemplating the furniture around us, and somewhat disappointed at the want of taste displayed in its arrangement, the door opens, and Sam, the yellow servant, bows Marston in with a gracious smile. It is in the south where the polite part is played by the negro. Deacon Rosebrook and Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy, a man of the world, follow Marston into the room. Marston is rather tall of figure, robust, and frank of countenance. A florid face, and an extremely large nose bordering on the red, at times give him an aldermanic air. He rubs his fingers through the short, sandy-coloured hair that bristles over a low forehead (Tom, the barber, has just fritted it) smiles, and introduces us to his friends. He is vain (vanity belongs to the slave world), is sorry his eyes are grey, but adds an assurance every now and then that his blood is of the very best stock. Lest a doubt should hang upon our mind, he asserts, with great confidence, that grey eyes indicate pure

Norman birth. As for phrenology! he never believed in a single bump, and cites his own contracted forehead as the very strongest proof against the theory. Indeed, there is nothing remarkable in our host's countenance, if we except its floridness; but a blunt nose protruding over a wide mouth and flat chin gives the contour of his face an expression not the most prepossessing. He has been heard to say, "A man who didn't love himself wasn't worth loving:" and, to show his belief in this principle of nature, he adorns his face with thick red whiskers, not the most pleasing to those unaccustomed to the hairy follies of a fashionable southern.

Times are prosperous; the plantation puts forth its bounties, and Marston withholds nothing that can make time pass pleasantly with those who honour him with a visit. He is dressed in an elaborately cut black coat, with sweeping skirts, a white vest, fancy-coloured pantaloons, and bright boots. About his neck is an enormous shirt collar, turned carelessly over, and secured with a plain black ribbon. Elder Praiseworthy is of lean figure, with sharp, craven features. The people of the parish have a doubtful opinion of him. Some say he will preach sermons setting forth the divine right of slavery, or any other institution that has freedom for its foe, provided always there is no lack of pay. As a divine he is particularly sensitive lest anything should be said disparagingly against the institution he lends his aid to protect. That all institutions founded in patriarchal usage are of God's creation he holds to be indisputable; and that working for their overthrow is a great crime, as well as an unpardonable sin, he never had the slightest doubt. He is careful of his clerical dress, which

is of smoothest black; and remembering how essential are gold-framed spectacles, arranges and re-arranges his with greatest care. He is a great admirer of large books with gilt edges and very expensive bindings. They show to best advantage in the southern parlour library, where books are rarely opened. To say the Elder is not a man of great parts, is to circulate a libel of the first magnitude. Indeed, he liked big books for their solidity; they reminded him of great thoughts well preserved, and sound principles more firmly established. At times he had thought they were like modern democratic rights, linked to huge comprehending faculties, such as was his good fortune to use when expounding state rights and federal obligations.

Deacon Rosebrook is a comely, fair-faced man, a moderate thinker, a charitable Christian, a very good man, who lets his deeds of kindness speak of him. He is not a politician —no! he is a better quality of man, has filled higher stations. Nor is he of the modernly pious—that is, as piety professes itself in our democratic world, where men use it more as a necessary appliance to subdue the mind than a means to improve civilization. But he was always cautious in giving expression to his sentiments, knowing the delicate sensibilities of those he had to deal with, and fearing lest he might spring a democratic mine of very illiberal indignation.

"Come, gentlemen guests, you are as welcome as the showers," says Marston, in a stentorious voice: "Be seated; you are at home under my roof. Yes, the hospitality of my plantation is at your service." The yellow man removes a table that stood in the centre of the room, places chairs around it, and each takes his seat.

"Pardon me, my dear Marston, you live with the comfort

of a nabob. Wealth seems to spring up on all sides," returns the Deacon, good-naturedly.

"And so I think," joins the Elder: "the pleasures of the plantation are manifold, swimming along from day to day; but I fear there is one thing our friend has not yet considered."

"Pray what is that? Let us hear it; let us hear it. Perhaps it is the very piety of nonsense," rejoined Marston, quickly. "Dead men and devils are always haunting us." The Elder draws his spectacles from his pocket, wipes them with his silk handkerchief, adjusts them on his nose, and replies with some effort, "The Future,"

"Nothing more?" Marston inquires, quaintly: "Never contented; riches all around us, favourable prospects for the next crop, prices stiff, markets good, advices from abroad exciting. Let the future take care of itself; you are like all preachers, Elder, borrowing darkness when you can't see light."

"The Elder, so full of allegory!" whispers the Deacon. "He means a moral condition, which we all esteem as a source of riches laid up in store for the future."

"I discover; but it never troubles me while I take care of others. I pray for my negro property—pray loudly and long. And then, their piety is a charge of great magnitude; but when I need your assistance in looking after it, be assured you will receive an extra fee."

"That's personal—personal, decidedly personal."

"Quite the reverse," returns Marston, suddenly smiling, and, placing his elbows on the table, rests his face on his hands. "Religion is well in its place, good on simple minds; just the thing to keep vassals in their places: that's

why I pay to have it talked to my property. Elder, I get the worth of my money in seeing the excitement my fellows get into by hearing you preach that old worn-out sermon. You've preached it to them so long, they have got it by heart. Only impress the rascals that it's God's will they should labour for a life, and they'll stick to it like Trojans: they are just like pigs, sir."

"You don't comprehend me, my friend Marston: I mean that you should prepare—its a rule applicable to all—to meet the terrible that may come upon us at any moment." The Elder is fearful that he is not quite explicit enough. He continues: "Well, there is something to be considered;" —he is not quite certain that we should curtail the pleasures of this life by binding ourselves with the dread of what is to come. "Seems as if we owed a common duty to ourselves," he ejaculates.

The conversation became more exciting, Marston facetiously attempting to be humorous at the Elder's expense: "It isn't the pleasure, my dear fellow, it's the contentment. We were all born to an end; and if that end be to labour through life for others, it must be right. Everything is right that custom has established right."

"Marston, give us your hand, my friend. 'Twould do to plead so if we had no enemies, but enemies are upon us, watching our movements through partizans' eyes, full of fierceness, and evil to misconstruct."

"I care not," interrupts Marston. "My slaves are my property—I shall do with them as it pleases me; no insinuations about morality, or I shall mark you on an old score. Do you sound? Good Elders should be good men; but they, as well as planters, have their frailties; it would not

do to tell them all, lest high heaven should cry out." Marston points his finger, and laughs heartily. "I wish we had seven lives to live, and they were all as happy as most of our planters could desire to make them."

The Elder understood the delicate hint, but desiring to avoid placing himself in an awkward position before the Deacon, began to change the conversation, criticising the merits of several old pictures hung upon the walls. They were much valued by Marston, as mementoes of his ancestry: of this the Elder attempted in vain to make a point. During this conversation, so disguised in meaning, the Molatto servant stood at the door waiting Marston's commands. Soon, wine and refreshments were brought in, and spread out in old plantation style. The company had scarcely filled glasses, when a rap sounded at the hall door: a servant hastened to announce a carriage; and in another minute was ushered into the room the graceful figure of a young lady whose sweet and joyous countenance bespoke the absence of care. She was followed by a genteelly-dressed young man of straight person and placid features.

"Oh! Franconia," said Marston, rising from his seat, grasping her hand affectionately, and bestowing a kiss on her fair cheek, for it was fair indeed.

Taking her right hand in his left, he added, "My niece, gentlemen; my brother's only daughter, and nearly spoiled with attentions." A pleasant smile stole over her face, as gracefully she acknowledged the compliment. In another minute three or four old negroes, moved by the exuberance of their affection for her, gathered about her, contending with anxious faces for the honour of seeing her comfortable.

"I love her!" continued Marston; "and as well as she

could a father she loves me, making time pass pleasantly with her cheerfulness." She was the child of his affections; and as he spoke his face glowed with animation. Scarce seventeen summers had bloomed upon his fair niece, who, though well developed in form, was of a delicate constitution, and had inherited that sensitiveness so peculiar to the child of the South, especially she who has been cradled in the nursery of ease and refinement. As she spoke, smiled, and raised her jewelled fingers, the grace accompanying the words was expressive of love and tenderness. Turning to the gentleman who accompanied her, "My friend!" she added, simply, with a frolicsome laugh. A dozen anxious black faces were now watching in the hall, ready to scamper round her ere she made her appearance to say, "How de'h!" to young Missus, and get a glimpse at her stranger friend. After receiving a happy salute from the old servants, she re-enters the room. "Uncle's always drinking wine when I come;—but Uncle forgets me; he has not so much as once asked me to join him!" She lays her hand on his arm playfully, smiles cunningly, points reproachfully at the Elder, and takes a seat at her uncle's side. The wine has seized the Elder's mind; he stares at her through his spectacles, and holds his glass with his left hand.

"Come, Dandy," said Marston, addressing himself to the mulatto attendant, "bring a glass; she shall join us." The glass is brought, Marston fills it, she bows, they drink to her and to the buoyant spirits of the noble southern lady. "I don't admire the habit; but I do like to please so," she whispers, and, excusing herself, skips into the parlour on the right, where she is again beset by the old servants, who rush to her, shake her hand, cling playfully

to her dress: some present various new-plucked flowers; others are become noisy with their chattering jargon. At length she is so beset with the display of their affection as to be compelled to break away from them, and call for Clotilda. "I must have Clotilda!" she says: "Tell her to come soon, Dandy: she alone can arrange my dress." Thus saying, she disappeared up a winding stair leading from the hall into the second story.

We were anxious to know who Clotilda was, and why Franconia should summon her with so much solicitude. Presently a door opened: Franconia appeared at the top of the stairs, her face glowing with vivacity, her hair dishevelled waving in beautiful confusion, giving a fascination to her person. "I do wish she would come, I do!" she mutters, resting her hands upon the banisters, and looking intently into the passage: "she thinks more of fussing over Annette's hair, than she does about taking care of mine. Well, I won't get cross—I won't! Poor Clotilda, I do like her; I can't help it; it is no more than natural that she should evince so much solicitude for her child: we would do the same." Scarcely had she uttered these words, when the beautiful female we have described in the foregoing chapter ran from her cabin, across the yard, into the mansion. "Where is young Miss Franconia?" she inquires; looks hastily around, ascends the stairs, greets Franconia with a fervent shake of the hand, commences adjusting her hair. There is a marked similarity in their countenances: it awakens our reflections. Had Clotilda exhibited that exactness of toilet for which Franconia is become celebrated, she would excel in her attractions.

There was the same oval face, the same arched brows; there was the same Grecian contour of features, the same sharply lined nose; there was the same delicately cut mouth, disclosing white, pearly teeth; the same eyes, now glowing with sentiment, and again pensive, indicating thought and tenderness; there was the same classically moulded bust, a shoulder slightly converging, of beautiful olive, enriched by a dark mole.

Clotilda would fain have kissed Franconia, but she dare not. "Clotilda, you must take good care of me while I make my visit. Only do my hair nicely, and I will see that Uncle gets a new dress for you when he goes to the city. If Uncle would only get married, how much happier it would be," says Franconia, looking at Clotilda the while.

"And me, too,—I would be happier!" Clotilda replies, resting her arms on the back of Franconia's lolling chair, as her eyes assumed a melancholy glare. She heaved a sigh.

"You could not be happier than you are; you are well cared for; Uncle will never see you want; but you must be cheerful when I come, Clotilda,—you must! To see you unhappy makes me feel unhappy."

"Cheerful!—its better said than felt. Can he or she be cheerful who is forced to sin against God and himself? There is little to be cheerful with, where the nature is not its own. Why should I be the despised wretch at your Uncle's feet: did God, the great God, make me a slave to his licentiousness?

"Suppress such feelings, Clotilda; do not let them get the better of you. God ordains all things: it is well to

abide by His will, for it is sinful to be discontented, especially where everything is so well provided. Why, Uncle has learned you to read, and even to write."

"Ah! that's just what gave me light; through it I knew that I had a life, and a soul beyond that, as valuable to me as yours is to you."

"Be careful, Clotilda," she interrupts; "remember there is a wide difference between us. Do not cross Uncle; he is kind, but he may get a freak into his head, and sell you."

Clotilda's cheeks brightened; she frowned at the word, and, giving her black hair a toss from her shoulder, muttered, "To sell me!—Had you measured the depth of pain in that word, Franconia, your lips had never given it utterance. To sell me!—'tis that. The difference is wide indeed, but the point is sharpest. Was it my mother who made that point so sharp? It could not! a mother would not entail such misery on her offspring. That name, so full of associations dear to me—so full of a mother's love and tenderness,—could not reflect pain. Nay; her affections were bestowed upon me,—I love to treasure them, I do. To tell me that a mother would entail misery without an end, is to tell me that the spirit of love is without good!"

"Do not make yourself unhappy, Clotilda. Perhaps you are as well with us as you would be elsewhere. Even at the free north, in happy New England, ladies would not take the notice of you we do: many of your class have died there, poor and wretched, among the most miserable creatures ever born to a sad end. And you are not black——"

"All is not truth that is told for such," Clotilda inter-

rupts Franconia. "If I were black, my life would have but one stream: now it is terrible with uncertainty. As I am, my hopes and affections are blasted."

"Sit down, Clotilda," rejoins Franconia, quickly.

Clotilda, having lavished her skill on Franconia's hair, seats herself by her side. Franconia affectionately takes her tapering hand and presses it with her jewelled fingers. "Remember, Clotilda," she continues, "all the negroes on the plantation become unhappy at seeing you fretful. It is well to seem happy, for its influence on others. Uncle will always provide for Annette and you; and he is kind. If he pays more attention to Ellen at times, take no notice of it. Ellen Juvarne is Indian, moved to peculiarities by the instincts of her race. Uncle is imprudent, I admit; but society is not with us as it is elsewhere!"

"I care not so much for myself," speaks the woman, in a desponding voice; "it is Annette; and when you spoke of her you touched the chord of all my troubles. I can endure the sin forced upon myself; but, O heavens! how can I butcher my very thoughts with the unhappy life that is before her? My poor mother's words haunt me. I know her feelings now, because I can judge them by my own—can see how her broken heart was crushed into the grave! She kissed my hand, and said, 'Clotilda, my child, you are born to a cruel death. Give me but a heart to meet my friends in judgment!'"

The child with the flaxen hair, humming a tune, came scampering up the stairs into the room. She recognises Franconia, and, with a sportive laugh, runs to her and fondles in her lap; then, turning to its mother, seems anxious to divide its affections beewcen them. Its features

resembled Franconia's—the similarity was unmistakeable; and although she fondled it, talked with it, and smoothed its little locks, she resisted its attempts to climb on her knee: she was cold.

"Mother says I look like you, and so does old Aunt Rachel, Miss Franconia—they do," whispers the child, shyly, as it twisted its fingers round the rings on Franconia's hand. Franconia blushed, and cast an inquiring look at Clotilda.

"You must not be naughty," she says; "those black *imps* you play with around Aunt Rachel's cabin teach you badness. You must be careful with her, Clotilda; never allow her to say such things to white people: she may use such expressions before strangers,—which would be extremely painful——"

"It seems too plain: if there be no social sin, why fear the degradation?" she quietly interrupts. "You cannot keep it from the child. O, how I should like to know my strange history, Franconia,—to know if it can be that I was born to such cruel misfortunes, such bitter heart-achings, such gloomy forebodings. If I were, then am I content with my lot."

Franconia listened attentively, saw the anguish that was bursting the bounds of the unhappy woman's feelings, and interrupted by saying, "Speak of it no more, Clotilda. Take your child; go to your cabin. I shall stay a few days: to-morrow I will visit you there." As she spoke, she waved her hand, bid Clotilda good night, kissing Annette as she was led down stairs. Now alone, she begins to contemplate the subject more deeply. It must be wrong, she says to herself: but few are brought to feel it who have the

power to remove it. The poor creature seems so unhappy; and my feelings are pained when they tell me how much she looks like me,—and it must be so; for when she sat by my side, looking in the glass the portrait of similarity touched my feelings deeply. 'Tis not the thing for Uncle to live in this way. Here am I, loved and beloved, with the luxury of wealth, and friends at my pleasure; I am caressed: she is but born a wretch to serve my Uncle's vanity; and, too, were I to reproach him, he would laugh at what he calls our folly, our sickly sensitiveness; he would tell me of the pleasures of southern life, southern scenery, southern chivalry, southern refinement;—yes, he would tell me how it were best to credit the whole to southern liberality of custom:—so it continues! There is a principle to be served after all: he says we are not sent into the world to excommune ourselves from its pleasures. This may be good logic, for I own I don't believe with those who want the world screwed up into a religious vice; but pleasure is divided into so many different qualities, one hardly knows which suits best now-a-days. Philosophers say we should avoid making pleasure of that which can give pain to others; but philosophers say so many things, and give so much advice that we never think of following. Uncle has a standard of his own. I do, however, wish southern society would be more circumspect, looking upon morality in its proper light. Its all doubtful! doubtful! doubtful! There is Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy; he preaches, preaches, preaches!—his preaching is to live, not to die by. I do pity those poor negroes, who, notwithstanding their impenetrable heads, are bored to death every Sunday with that selfsame sermon. Such preaching, such

strained effort, such machinery to make men pious,—it's as soulless as a well. I don't wonder the world has got to be so very wicked, when the wickedness of the slavery church has become so sublime. And there's Uncle, too,—he's been affected just in that way, hearing pious little ones to uphold that which in his soul he knew to be the heaviest wickedness the world groaned under, he has come to look upon religion as if it were a commodity too stale for him. He sees the minister of God's Word a mere machine of task, paid to do a certain amount of talking to negroes, endeavouring to impress their simple minds with the belief that it is God's will they should be *slaves*. And this is all for necessity's sake!" In this musing mood she sits rocking in her chair, until at length, overcome with the heat, she reclines her head against the cushion, resigning herself to the soothing embrace of sweet sleep.

The moon's silver rays were playing on the calm surface of the river, the foliage on its banks seemed bathed in quiet repose, the gentle breeze, bearing its balmy odours, wafted through the arbour of oaks, as if to fan her crimson cheeks; the azalia and magnolia combined their fragrance, impregnating the dew falling over the scene, as if to mantle it with beauty. She slept, a picture of southern beauty; her auburn tresses in undulating richness playing to and fro upon her swelling bosom,—how developed in all its delicacy,—its sensitive nature made more lovely by the warmth and generosity of her heart. Still she slept, her youthful mind had burned with joy and buoyancy: about her there was a ravishing simplicity more than earthly: a blush upon her cheek became deeper,—it was the blush of love that soars in a dream, that tells its tale

in nervous vibrations, adding enchantment to sleeping voluptuousness;—and yet all was sacred, an envied object no rude hand dare touch!

Franconia had been educated at the north, in a land where—God bless the name—Puritanism is not quite extinct; and through the force of principles there inculcated had outgrown much of that feeling which at the south admits to be right what is basely wrong. She hesitated to reproach Marston with the bad effect of his life, but resolved on endeavouring to enlist Clotilda's confidence, and learn how far her degraded condition affected her feelings. She saw her with the same proud spirit that burned in her own bosom; the same tenderness, the same affection for her child, the same hopes and expectations for the future, and its rewards. The question was, what could be done for Clotilda? Was it better to reason with her,—to, if possible, make her happy in her condition? Custom had sanctioned many unrighteous inconsistencies: they were southern, nothing more! She would intercede with her Uncle, she would have him sign free papers for Clotilda and her child; she saw a relationship which the law could not disguise, though it might crush out the natural affections. With these thoughts passing in her mind, her imagination wandered until she dropped into the sleep we have described.

There she slept, the blushes suffusing her cheeks, until old Aunt Rachel, puffing and blowing like an exhausting engine, entered the room. Aunty is the pink of a plantation mother: she is as black as the blackest, has a face embodying all the good-nature of the plantation, boasts of her dimensions, which she says are six feet, well as anybody proportioned. Her head is done up in a flashy bandana,

PLATE I.



FRANCONIA SLEEPING.

"If young missus aint nappin' just so nice! I likes to cotch 'em just so."

the points nicely crosslain, and extending an elaborate distance beyond her ears, nearly covering the immense circular rings that hang from them. Her gingham dress, starched *just so*, her whitest white apron, never worn before missus come, sets her off to great advantage. Aunty is a good piece of property—tells us how many hundred dollars there is in her—feels that she has been promoted because Mas'r told somebody he would not take a dollar less for her. She can superintend the domestic affairs of the mansion just as well as anybody. In one hand she bears a cup of orange-grove coffee, in the other a fan, made of palmetto-leaves.

"Gi'h—e—you!" she exclaimed. "If young missus aint nappin' just so nice! I likes to cotch 'em just so;" and setting her tray upon a stand, she views Franconia intently, and in the exuberance of her feelings seats herself in front of her chair, fanning her with the palmetto. The inquisitive and affectionate nature of the good old slave was here presented in its purest. Nothing can be stronger, nothing show the existence of happy associations more forcibly. The old servant's attachment is proverbial,—his enthusiasm knows no bounds,—Mas'r's comfort absorbs all his thoughts. Here, Aunt Rachel's feelings rose beyond her power of restraint: she gazed on her young missus with admiration, laughed, fanned her more and more; then grasping her little jewelled hand, pressed it to her spacious mouth and kissed it. "Young Missus! Franconia, I does lub ye so!" she whispers.

"Why, Aunt Rachel!" ejaculated Franconia, starting suddenly: "I am glad you wakened me, for I dreamed of trouble: it made me weak—nervous. Where is Clotilda?"

And she stared vacantly round the room, as if unconscious of her position. "Guess 'e aint 'bout nowhere. Ye see, Miss, how she don't take no care on ye,—takes dis child to stir up de old cook, when ye comes to see us." And stepping to the stand she brings the salver; and in her excitement to serve Missus, forgets that the coffee is cold. "Da'h he is; just as nice as 'em get in de city. Rachel made 'em!"

"I want Clotilda, Rachel; you must bring her to me. I was dreaming of her and Annette; and she can tell dreams——"

The old slave interrupts her. "If Miss Franconia hab had dream, 'e bad, sartin. Old Mas'r spoil dat gal, Clotilda, —make her tink she lady, anyhow. She mos' white, fo'h true; but aint no better den oder nigger on de plantation," she returns. Franconia sips her coffee, takes a waf from the plate as the old servant holds it before her, and orders Dandy to summon Clotilda.



CHAPTER III.

THINGS ARE NOT SO BRIGHT AS THEY SEEM.

The following morning broke forth bright and serene. Marston and his guests, after passing a pleasant night, were early at breakfast. When over, they joined him for a stroll over the plantation, to hear him descant upon the prospects of the coming crop. Nothing could be more certain, to his mind, than a bountiful harvest. The rice, cotton, and corn grounds had been well prepared, the weather was most favourable, he had plenty of help, a good overseer, and faithful drivers. "We have plenty,—we live easy, you see, and our people are contented," he says, directing his conversation to the young Englishman, who was suspected of being Franconia's friend. "We do things different from what you do in your country. Your countrymen will not learn to grow cotton: they manufacture it, and hence we are connected in firm bonds. Cotton connects many things, even men's minds and souls. You would like to be a planter, I know you would: who would not, seeing how we live? Here is the Elder, as happy a fellow as you'll find in forty. He can be as jolly as an Englishman over a good dinner: he can think with anybody, preach with anybody!" Touching the Elder on the shoulder, he smiles, and with an insinuating leer, smooths his beard. "I am at your service," replies the Elder, folding his arms.

"I pay him to preach for my nigger property,—I pay him to teach them to be good. He preaches just as I wants him to. My boys think him a little *man*, but a *great* divine. You would like to hear the Elder on Sunday; he's funny then, and has a very funny sermon, which you may get by heart without much exertion." The young man seems indifferent to the conversation. He had not been taught to realise how easy it was to bring religion into contempt.

"Make no grave charges against me, Marston; you carry your practical jokes a little too far, Sir. I am a quiet man; but the feelings of quiet men may be disturbed." The Elder speaks moodily, as if considering whether it were best to resent Marston's trifling sarcasm. Deacon Rosebrook now interceded by saying, with unruffled countenance, that the Elder had but one thing funny about him,—his dignity on Sundays: that he was, at times, half inclined to believe it the dignity of cogniac, instead of pious sentiment.

"I preach my sermon,—who can do more?" the Elder rejoins, with seeming concern for his honour. "I thought we came to view the plantation?"

"Yes, true; but our little *repartee* cannot stop our sight. You preach your sermon, Elder,—that is, you preach what there is left of it. It is one of the best-used sermons ever manufactured. It would serve as a model for the most stale Oxonian. Do you think you could write another like it? It has lasted seven years, and served the means of propitiating the gospel on seven manors. Can they beat that in your country?" says Marston, again turning to the young Englishmam, and laughing at the Elder, who was deliberately taking off his glasses to wipe the perspiration from his forehead.

"Our ministers have a different way of patching up old sermons; but I'm not quite sure about their mode of getting them," the young man returns, takes Deacon Rosebrook's arm, and walks ahead.

"The Elder must conform to the doctrines of the South; but they say he bets at the race-course, which is not an uncommon thing for our divines," rejoins the Deacon, facetiously.

The Elder, becoming seriously inclined, thinks gentlemen had better avoid personalities. Personalities are not tolerated in the South, where gentlemen are removed far above common people, and protect themselves by the code duello He will expose Marston.

Marston's good capon sides are proof against jokes. He may crack on, that individual says.

"My friend," interposed the Elder, "you desired me to preach to your niggers in one style and for one purpose,—according to the rule of labour and submission. Just such an one as your niggers would think the right stripe, I preached, and it made your niggers wonder and gape. I'll pledge you my religious faith I can preach a different——"

"Oh! oh! oh! Elder," interrupted Marston, "pledge something valuable."

"To me, my faith is the most sacred thing in the world. I will—as I was going to say—preach to your moulding and necessities. Pay for it, and, on my word, it shall be in the cause of the South! With the landmarks from my planter customers, I will follow to their liking," continues Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy, not a smile on his hard face.

Deacon Rosebrook thinks it is well said. Pay is the great desideratum in everything. The Elder, though not

an uncommon southern clergyman, is the most versatile preacher to be met with in a day's walk. Having a wonderful opinion of nigger knowledge, he preaches to it in accordance, receiving good pay and having no objection to the wine.

"Well, Gentlemen," Marston remarks, coolly, "I think the Elder has borne our jokes well; we will now go and moisten our lips. The elder likes my old Madeira—always passes the highest compliments upon it." Having sallied about the plantation, we return to the mansion, where Dandy, Enoch, and Sam (three well-dressed mulattoes), their hair frizzed and their white aprons looking so bright, meet us at the veranda, and bow us back into the parlour, as we bear our willing testimony of the prospects of the crop. With scraping of feet, grins, and bows, they welcome us back, smother us with compliments, and seem overwilling to lavish their kindness. From the parlour they bow us into a long room in right wing, its walls being plain boarded, and well ventilated with open seams. A table is spread with substantial edibles,—such as ham, bacon, mutton, and fish. These represent the southern planter's fare, to which he seldom adds those pastry delicacies with which the New Englander is prone to decorate his table. The party become seated as Franconia graces the festive board with her presence, which, being an incentive of gallantry, preserves the nicest decorum, smooths the conversation. The wine-cup flows freely; the Elder dips deeply—as he declares it choice. Temperance being unpopular in the south, it is little regarded at Marston's mansion. As for Marston himself, he is merely preparing the way to play facetious jokes on the Elder, whose arm he

touches every few minutes, reminding him how backward he is in replenishing his glass.

Not at all backward in such matters, the Elder fills up, asks the pleasure of drinking his very good health, and empties the liquid into the safest place nearest at hand. Repeated courses have their effect; Marston is pleased, the Elder is mellow. With muddled sensibilities his eyes glare wildly about the table, and at every fresh invitation to drink he begs pardon for having neglected his duty, fingers the ends of his cravat, and deposits another glass,—certainly the very last. Franconia, perceiving her uncle's motive, begs to be excused, and is escorted out of the room. Mr. Praiseworthy, attempting to get a last glass of wine to his lips without spilling, is quite surprised that the lady should leave. He commences descanting on his own fierce enmity to infidelity and catholicism. He would that everybody rose up and trampled them into the dust; both are ruinous to negro property.

Marston coolly suggests that the Elder is decidedly uncatholicised.

"Elder," interrupted Deacon Rosebrook, touching him on the shoulder, "you are modestly undone—that is, very respectably sold to your wine."

"Yes," rejoined Marston; "I would give an extra ten dollars to hear him preach a sermon to my niggers at this moment."

"Villainous inconsistency!" exclaimed the Elder, in an indistinct voice, his eyes half closed, and the spectacles gradually falling from his nose. "You are scandalising my excellent character, which can't be replaced with gold." Making another attempt to raise a glass of wine to his lips,

as he concluded, he unconsciously let the contents slide into his bosom, instead of his mouth.

"Well, my opinion is, Elder, that if you get my nigger property into heaven with your preaching, there'll be a chance for the likes of me," said Marston, watching the Elder intently. It was now evident the party were all becoming pretty deeply tinctured. Rosebrook thought a minister of the gospel, to get in such a condition, and then refer to religious matters, must have a soul empty to the very core. There could be no better proof of how easily true religion could be brought into contempt. The Elder foreclosed with the spirit, considered himself unsafe in the chair, and was about to relieve it, when Dandy caught him in his arms like a lifeless mass, and carried him to a settee, upon which he spread him, like a substance to be bleached in the sun.

"Gentlemen! the Elder is completely unreverenced,—he is the most versatile individual that ever wore black cloth. I reverence him for his qualities," says Marston: then, turning to Maxwell, he continued, "you must excuse this little joviality; it occurs but seldom, and the southern people take it for what it is worth, excusing, or forgetting its effects."

"Don't speak of it—it's not unlike our English do at times—nor do our ministers form exceptions; but they do such things under a monster protection, without reckoning the effect," the Englishman replied, looking round as if he missed the presence of Franconia.

The Elder, soon in a profound sleep, was beset by swarms of mosquitoes preying upon his haggard face, as if it were good food. "He's a pretty picture," says Marston, looking upon the sleeping Elder with a frown, and then working

his fingers through his crispy red hair. "A hard subject for the student's knife he'll make, won't he?" To add to the comical appearance of the reverend gentleman, Marston, rising from his seat, approached him, drew the spectacles from his pocket, and placed them on the tip of his nose, adding piquancy to his already indescribable physiognomy.

"Don't you think this is carrying the joke a point too far?" asked Deacon Rosebrook, who had been some time silently watching the prostrate condition of Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy.

Marston shrugs his shoulders, whispers a word or two in the ear of his friend Maxwell, twirls his glass upon the table. He is somewhat cautious how he gives an opinion on such matters, having previously read one or two law books; but believes it does'nt portray all things just right. He has studied ideal good—at least he tells us so—if he never practises it; finally, he is constrained to admit that this 'ere's all very well once in a while, but become tiresome—especially when kept up as strong as the Elder does it. He is free to confess that southern mankind is curiously constituted, too often giving license to revelries, but condemning those who fall by them. He feels quite right about the Elder's preaching being just the chime for his nigger property; but, were he a professing Christian, it would'nt suit him by fifty per cent. There is something between the mind of a "nigger" and the mind of a white man,—something he can't exactly analyse, though he is certain it is wonderfully different; and though such preaching can do niggers no harm, he would just as soon think of listening to Infidelity. Painful as it was to acknowledge

the fact, he only appeared at the "Meet'n House" on Sundays for the looks of the thing, and in the hope that it might have some influence with his nigger property. Several times he had been heard to say it was mere machine-preaching—made according to pattern, delivered according to price, by persons whose heads and hearts had no sympathy with the downcast.

"There's my *prime fellow* Harry; a right good fellow, worth nine hundred, nothing short, and he is a Christian in conscience. He has got a kind of a notion into his head about being a divine. He thinks, in the consequence of his black noddle, that he can preach just as well as anybody; and, believe me, he can't read a letter in the book,—at least, I don't see how he can. True, he has heard the Elder's sermon so often that he has committed every word of it to memory,—can say it off like a plantation song, and no mistake." Thus Marston discoursed. And yet he declared that nobody could fool him with the idea of "niggers" having souls: they were only mortal,—he would produce abundant proof, if required.

Deacon Rosebrook listened attentively to this part of Marston's discourse. "The task of proving your theory would be rendered difficult if you were to transcend upon the scale of blood," he replied, getting up and spreading his handkerchief over the Elder's face, to keep off the mosquitoes.

"When our most learned divines and philosophers are the stringent supporters of the principle, what should make the task difficult? Nevertheless, I admit, if my fellow Harry could do the preaching for our plantation, no objections would be interposed by me; on the contrary, I could make a good speculation by it. Harry would be worth two

common niggers then. Nigger property, christianised, is the most valuable of property. You may distinguish a christianised nigger in a moment; and piety takes the stubborn out of their composition better than all the cow-hides you can employ; and, too, it's a saving of time, considering that it subdues so much quicker," says Marston, stretching back in his chair, as he orders Dandy to bring Harry into his presence. He will tell them what he knows about preaching, the Elder's sermon, and the Bible!

Maxwell smiles at such singularly out of place remarks on religion. They are not uncommon in the south, notwithstanding.

A few minutes elapsed, when Dandy opened the door, and entered the room, followed by a creature (a piece of property!) in which the right of a soul had been disputed, not alone by Marston, but by southern ministers and southern philosophers. The *thing* was very good-looking, very black;—it had straight features, differing from the common African, and stood very erect. We have said he differed from the common African—we mean, as he is recognised through our prejudices. His forehead was bold and well-developed—his hair short, thick and crispy, eyes keen and piercing, cheeks regularly declining into a well-shaped mouth and chin. Dejected and forlorn, the wretch of chance stood before them, the fires of a burning soul glaring forth from his quick wandering eyes. "There!" exclaimed Marston. "See that," pointing at his extremes; "he has foot enough for a brick-maker, and a head equal to a deacon —no insinuation, my friend," bowing to Deacon Rosebrook. They say it takes a big head to get into Congress; but I'm afraid, Harry, I'd never get there."

The door again opened, and another clever-looking old negro, anxious to say "*how de do*" to mas'r and his visitors, made his appearance, bowing, and keeping time with his foot. "Oh, here's my old daddy—old Daddy Bob, one of the best old niggers on the plantation; Harry and Bob are my deacons. There,—stand there, Harry; tell these gentlemen,—they are right glad to see you,—what you know about Elder Praiseworthy's sermon, and what you can do in the way of preaching," says Marston, laughing good-naturedly.

"Rather a rough piece of property to make a preacher of," muttered Maxwell.

The poor fellow's feet were encrusted as hard as an alligator's back; and there he stood, a picture upon which the sympathies of Christendom were enlisted—a human object without the rights of man, in a free republic. He held a red cap in his left hand, a pair of coarse osnaburg trousers reached a few inches below his knees, and, together with a ragged shirt of the same material, constituted his covering.

"You might have dressed yourself before you appeared before gentlemen from abroad—at least, put on your new jacket," said Marston.

"Why, mas'r, t'ant de clothes. God neber make Christian wid 'e his clothes on;—den, mas'r, I gin' my new jacket to Daddy Bob. But neber mind him, mas'r—you wants I to tell you what I tinks ob de Lor. I tink great site ob the Bible, mas'r, but me don' tink much ob Elder's sermon, mas'r."

"How is that, Harry?" interrupted the deacon.

"Why, Mas'r Deacon, ye sees how when ye preaches de

good tings ob de Lor', ye mus'nt 'dulge in 'e wicked tings on 'arth. A'h done want say Mas'r Elder do dem tings—but 'e seem to me t' warn't right wen 'e join de wickedness ob de world, and preach so ebery Sunday. He may know de varse, and de chapter, but 'e done preach what de Lor' say, nohow."

"Then you don't believe in a one-sided sermon, Harry?" returned the deacon, while Marston and Maxwell sat enjoying the negro's simple opinion of the Elder's sermon."

"No, mas'r. What the Bible teach me is to lob de Lor'—be good myself, and set example fo'h oders. I an't what big white Christian say must be good, wen 'e neber practice him,—but I good in me heart when me tink what de Lor' say be good. Why, mas'r, Elder preach dat sarmon so many Sundays, dat a' forgot him three times, since me know 'im ebery word," said Harry; and his face began to fill with animation and fervency.

"Well, now, Harry, I think you are a little too severe on the Elder's sermon; but if you know so much about it, give these gentlemen a small portion of it, just to amuse them while the Elder is taking a nap," said Marston.

"Ay, mas'r, he nap dat way too often for pious man what say he lobe de Lor'," replied Harry; and drawing himself into a tragic attitude, making sundry gesticulations, and putting his hand to his forehead, commenced with the opening portion of the Elder's sermon. "And it was said—Servants obey your masters, for that is right in the sight of the Lord," and with a style of native eloquence, and rich cantation, he continued for about ten minutes, giving every word, *verbatim*, of the Elder's sermon; and would

have kept it up, in word and action, to the end, had he not been stopped by Marston. All seemed astonished at his power of memory. Maxwell begged that he might be allowed to proceed.

"He's a valuable fellow, that—eh?" said Marston. He'll be worth three-sixteenths of a rise on cotton to all the planters in the neighbourhood, by-and-by. He's larned to read, somehow, on the sly—isn't it so, Harry? come, talk up!"

"Yes, mas'r, I larn dat when you sleepin'; de Lor' tell me his spirit warn't in dat sarmon what de Elder preach, —dat me must sarch de good book, and make me own tinking valuable. Mas'r tink ignorant nigger lob him best, but t'ant so, mas'r. Good book make heart good, and make nigger love de Lor', and love mas'r too."

"I'll bet the rascal's got a Bible, or a Prayer-book, hid up somewhere. He and old Daddy Bob are worse on religion than two old coons on a fowl-yard," said Marston; and old Aunt Rachel entered the room to fuss around a little, and have a pleasant meeting with mas'r's guests. Harry smiled at Marston's remark, and turned his eyes upward, as much as to say, "a day will come when God's Word will not thus be turned into ridicule!"

"And he's made such a good old Christian of this dark sinner, Aunt Rachel, that I wouldn't take two thousand dollars for her. I expect she'll be turning preacher next, and going north to join the abolitionists."

"Mas'r," said Rachel, "'t wouldn't do to mind what you say. Neber mind, you get old one ob dese days; den you don't make so much fun ob old Rachel."

"Shut up your corn-trap," Marston says, smiling; and

turning to his guests, continues—"You hear that, gentlemen; she talks just as she pleases, directs my household as if she were governor." Again, Aunt Rachel, summoning her dignity, retorts,

"Not so, Mas'r Deacon, (turning to Deacon Rosebrook,) 't won't square t' believe all old Boss tell, dat it won't! Mas'r take care ob de two cabins in de yard yander, while I tends de big house." Rachel was more than a match for Marston; she could beat him in quick retort. The party, recognising Aunt Rachel's insinuation, joined in a hearty laugh. The conversation was a little too pointed for Marston, who, changing the subject, turned to Harry, saying, "now, my old boy, we'll have a little more of your wisdom on religious matters." Harry had been standing the while like a forlorn image, with a red cap in his hand.

"I can preach, mas'r; I can do dat, fo'h true," he replied quickly. "But mas'r, nigger got to preach against his colour; *Buckra* tink nigger preachin' ain't good, cus he black."

"Never mind that, Harry," interrupts Marston: "We'll forget the nigger, and listen just as if it were all white. Give us the very best specimen of it. Daddy Bob, my old patriarch, must help you; and after you get through, he must lift out by telling us all about the time when General Washington landed in the city; and how the people spread carpets, at the landing, for him to walk upon." The entertainment was, in Marston's estimation, quite a *recherché* concern: that his guests should be the better pleased, the venerable old Daddy Bob, his head white with goodly years of toil, and full of genuine negro humour, steps forward to perform his part. He makes his best bows, his best scrapes, his best laughs; and says, "Bob

ready to do anything to please mas'r." He pulls the sleeves of his jacket, looks vacantly at Harry, is proud to be in the presence of mas'r's guests. He tells them he is a better nigger "den" Harry, points to his extremes, which are decorated with a pair of new russet broghans.

"Daddy's worth his weight in gold," continues Marston, "and can do as much work as any nigger on the plantation, if he *is* old."

"No, no, mas'r; I ain't so good what I was. Bob can't tote so much wid de hoe now. I work first-rate once, mas'r, but 'a done gone now!"

"Now, Bob, I want you to tell me the truth,—niggers will lie, but you are an exception, Bob; and can tell the truth when there's no bacon in the way."

"Gih! Mas'r, I do dat sartin," replied Bob, laughing heartily, and pulling up the little piece of shirt that peeped out above the collar of his jacket.

"How did Harry and you come by so much knowledge of the Bible? you got one somewhere, hav'n't you?" enquired Marston, laconically.

This was rather a "poser" on Bob; and, after stammering and mumbling for some time—looking at Harry slyly, then at Marston, and again dropping his eyes on the floor, he ejaculated,

"Well, mas'r, 'spose I might as well own 'im. Harry and me got one, for sartin!"

"Ah, you black rascals, I knew you had one somewhere. Where did you get it? That's some of Miss Franconia's doings."

"Can't tell you, mas'r, whar I got him; but he don't stop my hoein' corn, for' true."

Franconia had observed Harry's attractiveness, and heard him wish for a Bible, that he might learn to read from it, —and she had secretly supplied him with one. Two years Harry and Daddy Bob had spent hours of the night in communion over it; the latter had learned to read from it, the former had imbibed its great truths. The artless girl had given it to them in confidence, knowing its strength in such cases, and that they, with a peculiar firmness in such cases, would never betray her trust. Bob would not have refused his master any other request; but he would never disclose the secret of Miss Franconia giving it.

"Well, my old faithful," said Marston, "we want you to put the sprit into Harry; we want to hear a sample of his preaching. Now, Harry, you can begin; give it big eloquence, none of the new fashion preaching, give us the old plantation break-down style."

The negro's countenance assumed a look indicative of more than his lips dare speak. Looking upward pensively, he replied,—"Can't do dat, mas'r; he ain't what do God justice; but there is something in de text,—where shall I take 'em from?"

"Ministers should choose their own; I always do," interrupted Deacon Rosebrook.

Daddy Bob, touching Harry on the arm, looks up innocently, interposes his knowledge of Scripture. "D'ar, Harry, I tells you what text to gin 'em. Gin 'em dat one from de fourt' chapter of Ephes: dat one whar de Lor' say: —'Great mas'r led captivity captive, and gin gifts unto men.' And whar he say, 'Till we come unto a unity of the faith of the knowledge of the son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;

that we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive.' "

"And you tink dat 'll do,—eh, Daddy?" Harry replies, looking at the old man, as if to say, were he anything but a slave he would follow the advice.

"Den, dars t' oder one, away 'long yonder, where 'c say in Isaiah, fifty-eight chapter—'Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness." The old man seemed perfectly at home on matters of Scripture; he had studied it in stolen moments.

The young Englishman seemed surprised at such a show of talent. He saw the humble position of the old man, his want of early instruction, and his anxiety to be enlightened. ' How singular!" he ejaculated, "to hear property preach, and know so much of the Bible, too! People in my country would open their eyes with surprise." The young man had been educated in an atmosphere where religion was prized—where it was held as a sacred element for the good of man. His feelings were tenderly susceptible; the scene before him awakened his better nature, struck deep into his mind. He viewed it as a cruel mockery of Christianity, a torture of innocent nature, for which man had no shame. He saw the struggling spirit of the old negro contending against wrong,—his yearnings for the teachings of Christianity, his solicitude for Marston's good. And he saw how man had cut down the unoffending image of himself—how Christian ministers had become the tyrant's hand-fellow in the work

of oppression. It incited him to resolution; a project sprung up in his mind, which, from that day forward, as if it had been a new discovery in the rights of man, he determined to carry out in future, for the freedom of his fellows.

Harry, in accordance with Bob's advice, chose the latter text. For some minutes he expounded the power of divine inspiration, in his simple but impressive manner, being several times interrupted by the Deacon, who assumed the right of correcting his philosophy. At length, Marston interrupted, reminding him that he had lost the "plantation gauge." "You must preach according to the Elder's rule," said he.

With a submissive stare, Harry replied: "Mas'r, a man what lives fo'h dis world only is a slave to himself; but God says, he dat lives fo'h de world to come, is the light of life coming forth to enjoy the pleasures of eternity;" and again he burst into a rhapsody of eloquence, to the astonishment and admiration of Maxwell, and even touching the feelings of Marston, who was seldom moved by such displays. Seeing the man in the thing of merchandise, he inclined to look upon him as a being worthy of immortality; and yet it seemed next to impossible that he should bring his natural feelings to realise the simple nobleness that stood before him,—the *man* beyond the increase of dollars and cents in his person! The coloured waiter's hand leant against the mantel-piece, watching the changes in Marston's countenance, as Daddy stood at Harry's side, in patriarchal muteness. A tear stealing down Maxwell's cheek told of the sensation produced; while Marston, setting his elbow on the table, supported his head in his hands, and listened.

The Deacon, good man that he was, filled his glass,—as if to say, "I don't stand nigger preaching.". As for the Elder, his *pishes* and painful gurglings, while he slept, were a source of much annoyance. Awaking suddenly (raising himself in a half-bent position), he rubs his little eyes, adjusts his spectacles on his nose, stares at Harry with surprise, and then, with quizzical demeanour, leaves us to infer what sort of a protest he is about to enter. He, however, thinks it better to say nothing.

"Stop, Harry," says Marston, interrupting him in a point of his discourse: then turning to his guests, he inquired, with a look of ridicule, "Gentlemen, what have you got to say against such preaching? Elder, you old snoring Christian, you have lost all the best of it. Why didn't you wake up before?"

"Verri-ly, truly! ah, indeed: you have been giving us a monkey-show with your nigger, I suppose. I thought I'd lost nothing; you should remember, Marston, there's a future," said the Elder, winking and blinking sardonically.

"Yes, old boosey," Marston replies, with an air of indifference, "and you should remember there's a present, which you may lose your way in. That venerable sermon won't keep you straight—"

The Elder is extremely sensitive on this particular point —anything but speak disparagingly of that sermon. It has been his stock in trade for numerous years. He begs they will listen to him for a minute, excuse this little trifling variation, charge it to the susceptibility of his constitution. He is willing to admit there is capital in his example which may be used for bad purposes, and says, "Somehow, when I take a little, it don't seem to go right." Again he gives a

vacant look at his friends, gets up, resting his hands on the table, endeavours to keep a perpendicular, but declares himself so debilitated by his sleep that he must wait a little longer. Sinking back upon the settee, he exclaims, "You had better send that nigger to his cabin." This was carrying the amusement a little beyond Marston's own "gauge," and it being declared time to adjourn, preparations were made to take care of the Elder, who was soon placed horizontally in a waggon and driven away for his home. "The Elder is gone beyond himself, beyond everything," said Marston, as they carried him out of the door. "You can go, Harry, I like your preaching; bring it down to the right system for my property, and I'll make a dollar or two out of it yet," he whispers, shaking his head, as Harry, bowing submissively leaves the door.

Just as they were making preparations to retire, a carriage drove to the gate, and in the next minute a dashing young fellow came rushing into the house, apparently in great anxiety. He was followed by a well-dressed man, whose countenance and sharp features, full of sternness, indicated much mechanical study. He hesitated as the young man advanced, took Marston by the hand, nervously, led him aside, whispered something in his ear. Taking a few steps towards a window, the intruder, for such he seemed, stood almost motionless, with his eyes firmly and watchfully fixed upon them a paper in his right hand. "It is too often, Lorenzo; these things may prove fatal," said Marston, giving an inquiring glance at the man, still standing at the window.

"I pledge you my honour, uncle, it shall be the last time," said the young stranger. "Uncle, I have not forgotten

your advice." Marston, much excited, exhibited changes of countenance peculiar to a man labouring under the effect of sudden disappointment. Apologising to his guests, he dismissed them (with the exception of Maxwell), ordered pen and ink, drew a chair to the table, and without asking the stranger to be seated, signed his name to a paper. While this was being done, the man who had waited in silence stepped to the door and admitted two gentlemanly-looking men, who approached Marston and authenticated the instrument. It was evident there was something of deep importance associated with Marston's signature. No sooner had his pen fulfilled the mission, than Lorenzo's face, which had just before exhibited the most watchful anxiety, lighted up with joy, as if it had dismantled its care for some new scene of worldly prosperity.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNEXPECTED CONFESSION.

HAVING executed the document, Marston ordered one of the servants to show Maxwell his room. The persons who had acted the part of justices, authenticating the instrument, withdrew without further conversation; while the person who had followed Lorenzo, for such was the young man's name, remained as if requiring some further negociation with Marston. He approached the table sullenly, and with one hand resting upon it, and the other adjusted in his vest, deliberately waited tho moment to intercept the conversation. This man, reader, is Monto Graspum, an immense dealer in human flesh,—great in that dealing in the flesh and blood of mankind which brings with it all the wickedness of the demon. It is almost impossible to conceive the suddenness with which that species of trade changes man into a craving creature, restless for the dross of the world. There he was, the heartless dealer in human flesh, dressed in the garb of a gentleman, and by many would have been taken as such. Care and anxiety sat upon his countenance; he watched the chances of the flesh market, stood ready to ensnare the careless youth, to take advantage of the frailer portions of a Southerner's noble nature. "A word or two with you, Mr. Marston," said he.

"Sit down, Graspum, sit down," Marston rejoined,

ordering Dandy to give him a chair; which being done he seats himself in front of Marston, and commences dilating upon his leniency. "You may take me for an importune feller, in coming this time o'night, but the fact is I've been —you know my feelings for helpin' everybody—good-naturedly drawn into a very bad scrape with this careless young nephew of yourn: he's a dashing devil, and you don't know it, he is. But I've stood it so long that I was compelled to make myself sure. This nephew of yourn," said he, turning to Lorenzo, "thinks my money is made for his gambling propensities, and if he has used your name improperly, you should have known of it before." At this Lorenzo's fine open countenance assumed a glow of indignation, and turning to his uncle, with a nervous tremor, he said, "Uncle, he has led me into this trouble. You know not the snares of city life; and were I to tell you him—this monster—yea, I say monster, for he has drawn me into a snare like one who was seeking to devour my life—that document, uncle, which he now holds in his hand saves me from a shame and disgrace which I never could have withstood before the world."

"Ah! you are just like all gamblers: never consider yourself in the light of bringing yourself into trouble. Take my advice, young man; there is a step in a gambler's life to which it is dangerous to descend, and if you have brought your father and uncle into trouble, blame neither me nor my money," returned Graspum.

"You do not say that there is forgery connected with this affair, do you?" inquired Marston, grasping Lorenzo by the arm.

"I wish it were otherwise, uncle," replied Lorenzo,

leaning forward upon the table and covering his face with his hands. "It was my folly, and the flattery of this man, which have driven me to it," he continued.

"Oh! cursed inconsistency: and you have now fallen back upon the last resource, to save a name that, once gone, cannot reinstate itself. Tell me, Monto Graspum; are you not implicated in this affair? Your name stands full of dark implications; are you not following up one of those avenues through which you make so many victims? What is the amount?" returned Marston.

"You will know that to-morrow. He has given paper in your name to an uncertain extent. You should have known this before. Your nephew has been leading a reckless gambler's life—spending whatsoever money came into his possession, and at length giving bills purporting to be drawn by you and his father. You must now honour them, or dishonour him. You see, I am straightforward in business: all my transactions are conducted with promptness; but I must have what is due to me. I have a purpose in all my transactions, and I pursue them to the end. You know the purport of this document, Marston; save yourself trouble, and do not allow me to call too often." Thus saying, he took his hat and left the room.

"Uncle," said Lorenzo, as soon as Graspum had left, "I have been led into difficulty. First led away by fashionable associations, into the allurements with which our city is filled, from small vices I have been hurried onward, step by step, deeper and deeper, until now I have arrived at the dark abyss. Those who have watched me through each sin, been my supposed friends, and hurried me onwards to this sad climax, have proved my worst enemies. I have but

just learned the great virtue of human nature,—mistrust him who would make pleasure of vice. I have ruined my father, and have involved you by the very act which you have committed for my relief to-night. In my vain struggle to relieve myself from the odium which must attach to my transactions I have only added to your sorrows. I cannot ask you to forgive me, nor can I disclose all my errors—they are manifold."

"This is an unexpected blow—one which I was not prepared to meet. I am ready to save your honour, but there is something beyond this which the voice of rumour will soon spread. You know our society, and the strange manner in which it countenances certain things, yet shuts out those who fall by them. But what is to be done? Although we may discharge the obligation with Graspum, it does not follow that he retains the stigma in his own breast. Tell me, Lorenzo, what is the amount?" inquired Marston, anxiously.

"My father has already discharged a secret debt of fourteen thousand dollars for me, and there cannot be less than thirty thousand remaining. Uncle, do not let it worry you; I will leave the country, bear the stigma with me, and you can repudiate the obligation," said he, pleading nervously, as he grasped his uncle's hand firmer and firmer.

Among the many vices of the south, spreading their corrupting influence through the social body, that of gambling stands first. Confined to no one grade of society, it may be found working ruin among rich and poor, old and young. Labour being disreputable, one class of men affect to consider themselves born gentlemen, while the planter is ever ready to indulge his sons with some profession they

seldom practise, and which too often results in idleness and its attendants. This, coupled to a want of proper society with which the young may mix for social elevation, finds gratification in drinking saloons, fashionable billiard rooms, and at the card table. In the first, gentlemen of all professions meet and revel away the night in suppers and wine. They must keep up appearances, or fall doubtful visitors of these fashionable stepping-stones to ruin. Like a furnace to devour its victims, the drinking saloon first opens its gorgeous doors, and when the burning liquid has inflamed the mental and physical man, soon hurries him onward into those fascinating habitations where vice and voluptuousness mingle their degrading powers. Once in these whirlpools of sin, the young man finds himself borne away by every species of vicious allurement—his feelings become unrestrained, until at length that last spark of filial advice which had hovered round his consciousness dies out. When this is gone, vice becomes the great charmer, and with its thousand snares and resplendent workers never fails to hold out a hope with each temptation; but while the victim now and then asks hope to be his guardian, he seldom thinks how surely he is sinking faster and faster to an irretrievable depth.

Through this combination of snares—all having their life-springs in slavery—Lorenzo brought ruin upon his father, and involved his uncle. With an excellent education, a fine person, frank and gentle demeanour, he made his way into the city, and soon attracted the attention of those who affect to grace polished society. Had society laid its restraints upon character and personal worth, it would have been well for Lorenzo; but the neglect to found this moral

conservator only serves to increase the avenues to vice, and to bring men from high places into the lowest moral scale. This is the lamentable fault of southern society; and through the want of that moral bulwark, so protective of society in the New England States (personal worth), estates are squandered, families brought to poverty, young men degraded, and persons once happy driven from those homes they can only look back upon with pain and regret. The associations of birth, education, and polished society (so much valued by the southerner), all become as nothing when poverty sets its seal upon the victim.

And yet, among some classes in the south there exists a religious sentiment apparently grateful; but what credit for sincerity shall we accord to it when the result proves that no part of the organisation itself works for the elevation of a degraded class? How much this is to be regretted we leave to the reader's discrimination. The want of a greater effort to make religious influence predominant has been, and yet is, a source of great evil. But let us continue our narrative, and beg the reader's indulgence for having thus transgressed.

Flattered and caressed among gay assemblages, Lorenzo soon found himself drawn beyond their social pleasantries into deeper and more alluring excitements. His frequent visits at the saloon and gambling-tables did not detract, for a time, from the social position society had conferred upon him.

His parents, instead of restraining, fostered these associations, prided themselves on his reception, providing means of maintaining him in this style of living. Vanity and passion led him captive in their gratifications; they were

inseparable from the whirlpool of confused society that triumphs at the south,—that leads the proud heart twisting in the agony of its follies. He cast himself upon this, like a frail thing upon a rapid stream, and—forgetting the voyage was short—found his pleasures soon ended in the troubled waters of misery and disgrace.

There is no fundamental morality in the south, nor is education invested with the material qualities of social good; in this it differs from the north, against which it is fast building up a political and social organisation totally at variance. Instead of maintaining those great principles upon which the true foundation of the republic stands, the south allows itself to run into a hyper-aristocratic vagueness, coupled with an arbitrary determination to perpetuate its follies for the guidance of the whole Union. And the effect of this becomes still more dangerous, when it is attempted to carry it out under the name of democracy,—American democracy! In this manner it serves the despotic ends of European despots: they point to the freeest government in the world for examples of their own absolutism, shield their autocracy beneath its democracy, and with it annihilate the rights of the commoner.

Heedlessly wending his way, the man of rank and station at one side, the courtesan with his bland smiles at the other, Lorenzo had not seen the black poniard that was to cut the cord of his downfall,—it had remained gilded. He drank copious draughts at the house of licentiousness, became infatuated with the soft music that leads the way of the unwary, until at length, he, unconsciously at it were, found himself in the midst of a clan who are forming a plot to put the black seal upon his dishonour. Monto Graspum, his

money playing through the hands of his minions in the gambling rooms, had professed to be his friend. He had watched his pliable nature, had studied the resources of his parents, knew their kindness, felt sure of his prey while abetting the downfall. Causing him to perpetrate the crime, from time to time, he would incite him with prospects of retrieve, guide his hand to consummate the crime again, and watch the moment when he might reap the harvest of his own infamy. Thus, when he had brought the young man to that last pitiless issue, where the proud heart quickens with a sense of its wrongs—when the mind recurs painfully to the past, imploring that forgiveness which seems beyond the power of mankind to grant, he left him a poor outcast, whose errors would be first condemned by his professed friends. That which seemed worthy of praise was forgotten, his errors were magnified; and the seducer made himself secure by crushing his victim, compromising the respectability of his parents, making the disgrace a forfeiture for life.

Unexpected as the shock was to Marston, he bore it with seeming coolness, as if dreading the appearance of the man who had taken advantage of the moment to bring him under obligations, more than he did the amount to be discharged. Arising from the table, he took Lorenzo by the hand, saying:—" Veil your trouble, Lorenzo! Let the past be forgotten, bury the stigma in your own bosom; let it be an example to your feelings and your actions. Go not upon the world to wrestle with its ingratitude; if you do, misfortune will befall you—you will stumble through it the remainder of your life. With me, I fear the very presence of the man who has found means of engrafting his avarice

upon our misfortunes; he deals with those in his grasp like one who would cut the flesh and blood of mankind into fragments of gain. Be firm, Lorenzo; be firm! Remember, it is not the province of youth to despair; be manly—manliness even in crime lends its virtue to the falling." At which he bid him good night, and retired to rest.

The young man, more pained at his uncle's kindness,—kindness stronger in its effects than reproof,—still lingered, as if to watch some change of expression on his uncle's countenance, as he left the door. His face changed into pallid gloominess, and again, as if by magic influence, filled with the impress of passion; it was despair holding conflict with a bending spirit. He felt himself a criminal, marked by the whispers of society; he might not hear the charges against him, nor be within the sound of scandal's tongue, but he would see it outlined in faces that once smiled at his seeming prosperity. He would feel it in the cold hand that had welcomed him,—that had warmly embraced him; his name would no longer be respected. The circle of refined society that had kindly received him, had made him one of its attractions, would now shun him as if he were contagion. Beyond this he saw the fate that hovered over his father's and his uncle's estates;—all the filial affection they had bestowed upon him, blasted; the caresses of his beloved and beautiful sister; the shame the exposure would bring upon her; the knave who held him in his grasp, while dragging the last remnants of their property away to appease dishonest demands, haunted him to despair. And, yet, to sink under them—to leave all behind him and be an outcast, homeless and friendless upon the world, where he could only look back upon the familiar scenes of his boyhood with regret, would be to carry a

greater amount of anguish to his destiny. The destroyer was upon him; his grasp was firm and painful. He might live a life of rectitude; but his principles and affections would be unfixed. It would be like an infectious robe encircling him,—a disease which he never could eradicate, so that he might feel he was not an empty vessel among honourable men. When men depicted their villains, moving in the grateful spheres of life, he would be one of their models; and though the thoughtlessness of youth had made him the type haunting himself by day and night, the world never made a distinction. Right and wrong were things that to him only murmured in distrust; they would be blemishes exaggerated from simple error; but the judgment of society would never overlook them. He must now choose between a resolution to bear the consequences at home, or turn his back upon all that had been near and dear to him,—be a wanderer struggling with the eventful trials of life in a distant land! Turning pale, as if frantic with the thought of what was before him, the struggle to choose between the two extremes, and the only seeming alternative, he grasped the candle that flickered before him, gave a glance round the room, as if taking a last look at each familiar object that met his eyes, and retired.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAROONING PARTY.

A MAROONING pic-nic had been proposed and arranged by the young beaux and belles of the neighbouring plantations. The day proposed for the festive event was that following the disclosure of Lorenzo's difficulties. Every negro on the plantation was agog long before daylight: the morning ushered forth bright and balmy, with bustle and confusion reigning throughout the plantation,—the rendezvous being Marston's mansion, from which the gay party would be conveyed in a barge, overspread with an awning, to a romantic spot, overshaded with luxuriant pines, some ten miles up the stream. Here gay fêtes, mirth and joy, the mingling of happy spirits, were to make the time pass pleasantly. The night passed without producing any decision in Lorenzo's mind; and when he made his appearance on the veranda an unusual thoughtfulness pervaded his countenance; all his attempts to be joyous failed to conceal his trouble. Marston, too, was moody and reserved even to coldness; that frank, happy, and careless expression of a genial nature, which had so long marked him in social gatherings, was departed. When Maxwell, the young Englishman, with quiet demeanour, attempted to draw him into conversation about the prospects of the day, his answers were measured, cold, beyond his power of comprehending, yet inciting.

To appreciate those pleasant scenes—those scenes so

apparently happy, at times adding a charm to plantation life—those innocent merry-makings in spring time—one must live among them, be born to the recreations of the soil. Not a negro on the plantation, old or young, who does not think himself part and parcel of the scene—that he is indispensably necessary to make Mars's enjoyment complete! In this instance, the lawn, decked in resplendent verdure, the foliage tinged by the mellow rays of the rising sun, presented a pastoral loveliness that can only be appreciated by those who have contemplated that soft beauty which pervades a southern landscape at morning and evening. The arbour of old oaks, their branches twined into a panoply of thick foliage, stretching from the mansion to the landing, seemed like a sleeping battlement, its dark clusters soaring above redolent brakes and spreading water-leaks. Beneath their fretted branches hung the bedewed moss like a veil of sparkling crystals, moving gently to and fro as if touched by some unseen power. The rice fields, stretching far in the distance, present the appearance of a mirror decked with shadows of fleecy clouds, transparent and sublime. Around the cabins of the plantation people—(the human property)—the dark sons and daughters of promiscuous families—are in "heyday glee:" they laughed, chattered, contended, and sported over the presence of the party;—the overseer had given them an hour or two to see the party "gwine so;" and they were overjoyed. Even the dogs, as if incited by an instinctive sense of some gay scene in which they were to take part, joined their barking with the jargon of the negroes, while the mules claimed a right to do likewise. In the cabins near the mansion another scene of fixing, fussing, toddling,

chattering, running here and there with sun-slouches, white aprons, fans, shades, baskets, and tin pans, presented itself; any sort of vessel that would hold provender for the day was being brought forth. Clotilda, her face more cheerful, is dressed in a nice drab merino, a plain white stomacher, a little collar neatly turned over: with her plain bodice, her white ruffles round her wrists, she presents the embodiment of neatness. She is pretty, very pretty; and yet her beauty has made her the worst slave—a slave in the sight of Heaven and earth! Her large, meaning eyes, glow beneath her arched brows, while her auburn hair, lain in smooth folds over her ears and braided into a heavy circle at the back of her head, gives her the fascinating beauty of a Norman peasant. Annette plays around her, is dressed in her very best,—for Marston is proud of the child's beauty, and nothing is withheld that can gratify the ambition of the mother, so characteristic, to dress with fantastic colours: the child gambols at her feet, views its many-coloured dress, keeps asking various unanswerable questions about Daddy Bob, Harry, and the pic-nic. Again it scrambles pettishly, sings snatches of some merry plantation song, pulls its braided hat about the floor, climbs upon the table to see what is in the basket.

Passing to the cabin of Ellen Gavarna, we see her in the same confusion which seems to have beset the plantation: her dark, piercing eyes, display more of that melancholy which marks Clotilda's; nor does thoughtfulness pervade her countenance, and yet there is the restlessness of an Indian about her,—she is Indian by blood and birth; her look calls up all the sad associations of her forefathers; her

black glossy hair, in heavy folds, hangs carelessly about her olive shoulders, contrasting strangely with the other.

"And you, Nicholas! remember what your father will say: but you must not call him such," she says, taking by the hand a child we have described, who is impatient to join the gay group.

"That ain't no harm, mother! Father always is fondling about me when nobody's lookin'," the child answers, with a pertness indicating a knowledge of his parentage rather in advance of his years.

We pass to the kitchen,—a little, dingy cabin, presenting the most indescribable portion of the scene, the smoke issuing from every crevice. Here old Peggy, the cook,—an enveloped representative of smoke and grease,—as if emerging from the regions of Vulcan, moves her fat sides with the independence of a sovereign. In this miniature smoke-pit she sweats and frets, runs to the door every few minutes, adjusts the points of her flashy bandana, and takes a wistful look at the movements without. Sal, Suke, Rose, and Beck, young members of Peggy's family, are working at the top of their energy among stew-pans, griddles, pots and pails, baskets, bottles and jugs. Wafs, fritters, donjohns and homeny flap-jacks, fine doused hams, savoury meats, ices, and fruit-cakes, are being prepared and packed up for the occasion. Negro faces of every shade seem full of interest and freshness, newly brightened for the pleasures of the day. Now and then broke upon our ear that plaintive melody with the words, "Down on the Old Plantation;" and again, "Jim crack corn, an' I don't care, for Mas'r's gone away." Then came Aunt Rachel, always persisting in her right to be master of ceremonies, dressed in

her Sunday bombazine, puffed and flounced, her gingham apron so clean, her head "did up" with the flashiest bandana in her wardrobe; its just the colour for her taste—real yellow, red, and blue, tied with that knot which is the height of plantation toilet: there is as little restraint in her familiarity with the gentry of the mansion as there is in her control over the denizens of the kitchen. Even Dandy and Enoch, dressed in their best black coats, white pantaloons, ruffled shirts, with collars endangering their ears, hair crisped with an extra nicety, stand aside at her bidding. The height of her ambition is to direct the affairs of the mansion: sometimes she extends it to the overseer. The trait is amiably exercised: she is the best nigger on the plantation, and Marston allows her to indulge her feelings, while his guests laugh at her native pompesity, so generously carried out in all her commands. She is preparing an elegant breakfast, which "her friends" must partake of before starting. Everything must be in her nicest: she runs from the ante-room to the hall, and from thence to the yard, gathering plates and dishes; she hurries Old Peggy the cook, and again scolds the waiters.

Daddy Bob and Harry have come into the yard to ask Marston's permission to join the party as boatmen. They are in Aunt Rachel's way, and she rushes past them, pushing them aside, and calling Mas'r to come and attend to their wants. Marston comes forward, greets them with a familiar shake of the hand, granting their request without further ceremony. Breakfast is ready; but, anxious for the amusement of the day, their appetites are despoiled. Franconia, more lovely than ever, presenting that ease elegance, and reserve of the southern lady, makes her

appearance in the hall, is escorted to the table leaning on the arm of Maxwell. Delicacy, sensitiveness, womanly character full of genial goodness, are traits with which the true southern lady is blessed:—would she were blessed with another, an energy to work for the good of the enslaved! Could she add that to the poetry of her nature, how much greater would be her charm—how much more fascinating that quiet current of thought with which she seems blessed! There is a gentleness in her impulses—a pensiveness in her smile—a softness in her emotions—a grace in her movements—an ardent soul in her love! She is gay and lightsome in her youth; she values her beauty, is capricious with her admirers, and yet becomes the most affectionate mother; she can level her frowns, play with the feelings, make her mercurial sympathy touching, knows the power of her smiles: but once her feelings are enlisted, she is sincere and ardent in her responses. If she cannot boast of the bright carnatic cheek, she can swell the painter's ideal with her fine features, her classic face, the glow of her impassioned eyes. But she seldom carries this fresh picture into the ordinary years of womanhood: the bloom enlivening her face is but transient; she loses the freshness of girlhood, and in riper years, fades like a sensitive flower, withering, unhappy with herself, unadmired by others.

Franconia sat at the table, a pensiveness pervading her countenance that bespoke melancholy: as she glanced inquiringly round, her eyes rested upon Lorenzo fixedly, as if she detected something in his manner at variance with his natural deportment. She addressed him; but his cold reply only excited her more: she resolved upon

knowing the cause ere they embarked. Breakfast was scarcely over before the guests of the party from the neighbouring plantations began to assemble in the veranda, leaving their servants in charge of the viands grouped together upon the grass, under a clump of oaks a few rods from the mansion. Soon the merry-makers, about forty in number, old and young, their servants following, repaired to the landing, where a long barge, surrounded by brakes and water-lilies, presented another picture.

"Him all straight, Mas'r—him all straight, jus so!" said Daddy Bob, as he strode off ahead, singing "Dis is de way to de jim crack corn."

Servants of all ages and colour, mammies and daddies, young 'uns and prime fellows,—"wenches" that had just become hand-maids,—brought up the train, dancing, singing, hopping, laughing, and sporting: some discuss the looks of their young mistresses, others are criticising their dress. Arrived at the landing, Daddy Bob and Harry, full of cares, are hurrying several prime fellows, giving orders to subordinate boatmen about getting the substantial on board,—the baskets of champagne, the demijohns, the sparkling nectar. The young beaux and belles, mingling with their dark sons and daughters of servitude, present a motley group indeed—a scene from which the different issues of southern life may be faithfully drawn.

A band of five musicians, engaged to enliven the sports of the day with their music, announce, "All on board!" and give the signal for starting by striking up "Life on the Ocean Wave." Away they speed, drawn by horses on the bank, amidst the waving of handkerchiefs, the soft notes of the music reverberating over the pine-clad hills. Smoothly

and gently, onward they speed upon the still bosom of the Ashly;—the deep, dark stream, its banks bedecked with blossoms and richest verdure, is indeed enough to excite the romantic of one's nature. Wild, yet serene with rural beauty, if ever sensations of love steal upon us, it is while mingling in the simple convivialities so expressive of southern life. On, on, the barge moved, as lovers gathered together, the music dancing upon the waters. Another party sing the waterman's merry song, still another trail of lilies, and a third gather into the prow to test champagne and ice, or regale with choice Havannas. Marston, and a few of the older members, seated at midships, discuss the all-absorbing question of State-rights; while the negroes are as merry as larks in May, their deep jargon sounding high above the clarion notes of the music. Now it subsides into stillness, broken only by the splashing of an alligator, whose sports call forth a rapturous shout.

After some three hours' sailing the barge nears a jut of rising ground on the left bank. Close by it is a grove of noble old pines, in the centre of which stands a dilapidated brick building, deserted for some cause not set forth on the door: it is a pretty, shaded retreat—a spot breathing of romance. To the right are broad lagoons stretching far into the distance; their dark waters, beneath thick cypress, presenting the appearance of an inundated grove. The cypress-trees hang their tufted tops over the water's surface, opening an area beneath studded with their trunks, like rude columns supporting a panoply of foliage.

The barge stops, the party land; the shrill music, still dancing through the thick forest, re-echoes in soft chimes as it steals back upon the scene. Another minute, and we

PLATE II.



MAROONING PARTY.

"It is a pretty, shaded retreat,—a spot breathing of romance."

hear the voices of Daddy Bob and Harry, Dandy and Enoch: they are exchanging merry laughs, shouting in great good-nature, directing the smaller fry, who are fagging away at the larder, sucking the ice, and pocketing the lemons. "Dat ain't just straight, nohow: got de tings ashore, an' ye get 'e share whin de white folk done! Don' make 'e nigger ob yourse'f, now, old Boss, doing tho ting up so nice," Daddy says, frowning on his minions. A vanguard have proceeded in advance to take possession of the deserted house; while Aunt Rachel, with her *cortège* of feminines, is fussing over "young missus." Here, a group are adjusting their sun-shades; there, another are preparing their fans and nets. Then they follow the train, Clotilda and Ellen leading their young representatives by the hand, bringing up the rear among a cluster of smaller fry. Taking peaceable possession of the house, they commence to clear the rooms, the back ones being reserved for the sumptuous collation which Rachel and her juniors are preparing. The musicians are mustered,—the young *belles* and *beaux*, and not a few old bachelors, gather into the front room, commence the *fêtes* with country dances, and conclude with the polka and schottische.

Rachel's department presents a bustling picture; she is master of ceremonies, making her sombre minions move at her bidding, adjusting the various dishes upon the table. None, not even the most favoured guests, dare intrude themselves into her apartments until she announces the completion of her tables, her readiness to receive friends. And yet, amidst all this interest of character, this happy pleasantry, this seeming contentment, there is one group pauses ere it arrives at the house,—dare not enter. The

distinction seems undefinable to us; but they, poor wretches, feel it deeply. Shame rankles deep, to their very heart's core. They doubt their position, hesitate at the door, and, after several nervous attempts to enter, fall back, —gather round a pine-tree, where they enjoy the day, separated from the rest. There is a simplicity—a forlornness, about this little group, which attracts our attention, excites our sympathies, unbends our curiosity: we would relieve the burden it labours under. They are Ellen Juverna, Clotilda, and their children. Socially, they are disowned; they are not allowed to join the festivities with those in the dance, and their feelings revolt at being compelled to associate with the negroes. They are as white as many of the whitest, have the same outlines of interest upon their faces; but their lives are sealed with the black seal of slavery. Sensible of the injustice that has stripped them of their rights, they value their whiteness; the blood of birth tinges their face, and through it they find themselves mere dregs of human kind,—objects of sensualism in its vilest associations.

Maxwell has taken a deep interest in Clotilda; and the solicitude she manifests for her child has drawn him still further in her favour; he is determined to solve the mystery *that shrouds her history.* Drawing near to them, he seats himself upon the ground at their side, inquires why they did not come into the house. "There's no place there for us,— none for me," Clotilda modestly replies, holding down her head, placing her arm around Annette's waist.

"You would enjoy it much better, and there is no restraint upon anyone."

"We know not why the day was not for us to enjoy as

well as others; but it is ordained so. Where life is a dreary pain, pleasure is no recompense for disgrace enforced upon us. They tell us we are not what God made us to be; but it is the worst torture to be told so. There is nothing in it—it is the curse only that remains to enforce wrong. Those who have lives to enjoy life, and those who move to make others happy, can enjoy their separate pleasures; our lives are between the two, hence there is little pleasure for us," she answered, her eyes moistening with tears.

"If you will but come with me—"

"Oh, I will go anywhere," she rejoined, quickly; "anywhere from this; that I may know who I am—may bear my child with me—may lead a virtuous life, instead of suffering the pangs of shame through a life of unholy trouble."

"She never knows when she's well off. If Marston was to hear her talk in that way, I wouldn't stand in her shoes," interrupted Ellen, with a significant air.

Touched by this anxious reply, Maxwell determined to know more of her feelings—to solve the anxiety that was hanging upon her mind, and, if possible, to carry her beyond the power that held her and her child in such an uncertain position.

"I meant into the house," said he, observing that Ellen was not inclined to favour Clotilda's feelings; and just at that moment the shrill sounds of a bugle summoned the party to the collation. Here another scene was enacted, which is beyond the power of pen to describe. The tables, decorated with wild flowers, were spread with meats of all descriptions,—fowl, game, pastry, and fruit, wines, and cool drinks. Faces wearing the blandest smiles, grave

matrons, and cheerful planters,—all dressed in rustic style and neatness—gathered around to partake of the feast, while servants were running hither and thither to serve mas'r and missus with the choicest bits. Toasts, compliments, and piquant squibs, follow the wine-cup. Then came that picture of southern life which would be more worthy of praise if it were carried out in the purity of motive:—as soon as the party had finished, the older members, in their turn, set about preparing a repast for the servants. This seemed to elate the negroes, who sat down to their meal with great pomp, and were not restrained in the free use of the choicest beverage. While this was going on, Marston ordered Rachel to prepare fruit and pastry for Ellen and Clotilda. "See to them; and they must have wine too," whispered Marston.

"I know's dat, old Boss," returned Rachel, with a knowing wink.

After the collation, the party divided into different sections. Some enjoyed the dance, others strolled through the pine-grove, whispering tales of love. Anglers repaired to the deep pond in quest of trout, but more likely to find water-snakes and snapping turtle. Far in the distance, on the right, moving like fairy gondolas through the cypress-covered lagoon, little barks skim the dark surface. They move like spectres, carrying their fair freight, fanned by the gentle breeze pregnant with the magnolia's sweet perfume. The fair ones in those tiny barks are fishing; they move from tree to tree trailing their lines to tempt the finny tribe here and there breaking the surface with their gambols.

Lorenzo, as we have before informed the reader, exhibited

signs of melancholy during the day. So evident were they that Franconia's sympathies became enlisted in his behalf, and even carried so far, that Maxwell mistook her manner for indifference toward himself. And, as if to confirm his apprehensions, no sooner had the collation ended than she took Lorenzo's arm and retired to the remains of an old mill, a few rods above the landing. It was a quiet, sequestered spot—just such an one as would inspire the emotions of a sensitive heart, recall the associations of childhood, and give life to our pent-up enthusiasm. There they seated themselves, the one waiting for the other to speak.

"Tell me, Lorenzo," said Franconia, laying her hand on his arm, and watching with nervous anxiety each change of his countenance, "why are you not joyous? you are gloomy to-day. I speak as a sister—you are nervous, faltering with trouble—"

"Trouble!" he interrupted, raising his eyes, and accompanying an affected indifference with a sigh. It is something he hesitates to disclose. He has erred! his heart speaks, it is high-handed crime! He looks upon her affectionately, a forced smile spreads itself over his face. How forcibly it tells its tale. "Speak out," she continues, tremulously: "I am a sister; a sister cannot betray a brother's secrets." She removes her hand and lays it gently upon his shoulder.

Looking imploringly in her face for a few minutes, he replies as if it were an effort of great magnitude. "Something you must not know—nor must the world! Many things are buried in the secrets of time that would make great commotion if the world knew them. It were well they passed unknown, for the world is like a great

stream with a surface of busy life moving on its way above a troubled current, lashing and foaming beneath, but only breaking here and there as if to mark the smothered conflict. And yet with me it is nothing, a moment of disappointment creeping into my contemplations, transplanting them with melancholy—"

"Something more!" interrupted Franconia, "something more; it is a step beyond melancholy, more than disappointment. Uncle feels it sensibly—it pains him, it wears upon him. I have seen it foremost in his thoughts." Her anxiety increases, her soft meaning eyes look upon him imploringly, she fondles him with a sister's tenderness, the tears trickling down her cheeks as she beholds him downcast and in sorrow. His reluctance to disclose the secret becomes more painful to her.

"You may know it soon enough," he replies. "I have erred, and my errors have brought me to a sad brink. My friends—those who have indulged my follies—have quickened the canker that will destroy themselves. Indulgence too often hastens the cup of sorrow, and when it poisons most, we are least conscious. It is an alluring charmer, betraying in the gayest livery—"

"Lorenzo," she interrupts, wiping the tears from her eyes. "Tell me all; remember woman's influence—she can relieve others when she cannot relieve herself. Make me your confidant—relieve your feelings."

"This night, Franconia, I shall bid a painful good-bye to those familiar scenes which have surrounded my life,—to you, my sister, to those faithful old friends of the plantation, Daddy Bob and Harry. They have fondled me, protected me, played with me in my childhood, led me to my boyish

sports when all was bright and pleasant, when the plantation had its merry scenes for slave and master. I must go upon the world, mingle with strange life, make experience my guardian. I have committed a crime—one which for ever disgraces the honourable——"

Crime, crime, crime! weighed itself in her mind. "And what of that?" she rejoined, suddenly; "a sister can forgive a brother any crime; and even a lover, if she love truly, can forget them in her affections. Do not go upon the world; be a man above crime, above the bar of scandal. Have confidence in yourself; do not let the injustice be gone over. Once on the world a wanderer, remember the untold tale of misery, making its victims to that death of conscience burning unseen."

"Nay, Franconia, you mean well; but you have not learned the world. Take this as my advice, remember it when I am gone, and in years to come you will acknowledge its truth.—Fortune at the south rests on an unsound foundation! We are lofty in feelings, but poor in principle, poor in government,—poor in that which has built our great republic. Uncertainty hangs over us at every step; but, whatever befall you, stand firm through adversity. Never chide others for the evils that may befall you; bear your burdens without casting reflections on others,—it is nobler! Befriend those who have no power to befriend themselves; and when the world forgets you, do not forget yourself. There is no step of return for those who falter in poverty. To-night I shall leave for the city; in a few days you will know all." Thus saying, he conducted Franconia back to rejoin the party, already making preparations to return.

He gave her an insight of his troubles, in such a manner

as to create deep agitation; and, although satisfied that an event of more than ordinary magnitude was at hand, she could not associate it with the commission of crime. The day, spent with all the conviviality of southern life, ended amidst the clang of merry voices, and soft music: a gay group assembled at the bank, ready to return under the cheering influence of music and moonlight.

The bugle sounded,—the soft notes of "Home, sweet Home!" followed: the party, forming into double file, gay and grotesque, marched through the grove to the barge. Servants, old and young, were in high glee; some joining in chorus with the music; some preparing the barge, others strewing branches and flowers in the pathway, to the delight of young "mas'r" and "missus,"—all singing. Aunt Rachel, high above her minions in authority, is poised on the bank, giving directions at the very top of her voice. Daddy Bob, Harry, and Dandy—(the latter named after "mas'r's" fleetest horse) are freighting their young "missusses" in their arms to the boat, shielding their feet from the damp.

"Now, mas'r, Old Boss," Bob says, directing himself to Marston, after completing his charge with the young ladies. "Jus' lef' 'um tote, old mas'r safe da'? So 'e don' mus e' foot." And forthwith he shoulders Marston, lands him like a bale of cotton on one of the seats, much to the amusement of those on board, sending forth shouts of applause. The party are on board; all is quiet for a minute; again the music strikes up, the barge is gliding over the still bosom of the fairy-like stream.

The sun has just sunk into a fiery cloud that hangs its crimson curtains high in the heavens, shedding reful-

gent beauty over the dark jungle lining the river's banks. And then, twilight, as if stealing its way across the hills, follows, softening the scene. Soon it has gone, the landscape sleeps, tranquilly arched by the serene vault of a southern sky. Everything seems peaceful, reposing, and serene; the air breathes warm and balmy, distributing its invigorating influence. The music has ceased, nothing but the ripple of the water is heard; then the stars, like pearls suspended over the dark surface, begin to glimmer and shine. Above all is the moon, like a silver goddess, rising stealthily and shedding her pale light upon the calm glow.

Onward, onward, onward, over the still stream, winding its way to the great deep, they move; and again the music echoes and re-echoes through the forest, over the lawn; dying away in chimes that faintly play around us. The sudden changes in the heavens,—monitor of things divine,—call up in Lorenzo's feelings the reverses of fortune that will soon take place on the plantation. He had never before recognised the lesson conveyed by heavenly bodies; and such was the effect at that moment that it proved a guardian to him in his future career.

It was near midnight when the barge reached the plantation. Fires were lighted on the bank, negroes were here and there stretched upon the ground, sleeping with such superlative comfort that it landed ere they awoke. One by one the parties returned for their homes; and, after shaking hands with Marston, taking an affectionate adieu of Franconia (telling her he would call on the morrow), lisping a kind word to the old negroes, Lorenzo ordered a horse, and left for the city. He took leave of the plantation, of its dearest associations, like one who had the conflict of battle before him, and the light of friendship behind.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER SCENE IN SOUTHERN LIFE.

In the city, a few miles from the plantation, a scene which too often affords those degrading pictures that disgrace a free and happy country was being enacted. A low brick building, standing in an area protected by a high fence, surmounted with spikes and other dangerous projectiles, formed the place. The upper and lower windows of this building were strongly secured with iron gratings, and emitted the morbid air from cells scarcely large enough to contain human beings of ordinary size. In the rear, a sort of triangular arena opened, along which was a line of low buildings displaying single and double cells. Some had iron rings in the floor, some had rings in the ceiling; and again, others had rings over head. Some of these confines of misery (for here men's souls were goaded by the avarice of our natures), were solitary; and at night, when the turmoil of the day had ceased, human wailings and the clank of chains might be heard breaking through the walls of this charnel-house. These narrow confines were filled with living beings—beings with souls, souls sold according to the privileges of a free and happy country,—a country that fills us with admiration of its greatness. It is here, O man, the tyrant sways his hand most! it is here the flesh and blood of the same Maker, in chains of death, yearns for freedom.

We walk through the corridor, between narrow arches containing the abodes of misery, while our ears drink the sad melancholy that sounds in agitated throbs, made painful by the gloom and darkness. Touching an iron latch, the door of a cell opens, cold and damp, as if death sat upon its walls; but it discloses no part of the inmate's person, and excites our sympathies still more. We know the unfortunate is there,—we hear the murmuring, like a death-bell in our ears; it is mingled with a dismal chaos of sound, piercing deep into our feelings. It tells us in terror how gold blasts the very soul of man—what a dark monster of cruelty he can become,—how he can forget the grave, and think only of his living self,—how he can strip reason of its right, making himself an animal with man for his food. See the monster seeking only for the things that can serve him on earth—see him stripping man of his best birth-right, see him the raving fiend, unconscious of his hell-born practices, dissevering the hope that by a fibre hangs over the ruins of those beings who will stand in judgment against him. His soul, like their faces, will be black, when theirs has been whitened for judgment in the world to come!

Ascending a few steps, leading into a centre building (where the dignified of human traffic is polished into respectability), we enter a small room at the right hand. Several men, some having the appearance of respectable merchants, some dressed in a coarse, red-mixed homespun, others smoking cigars very leisurely, are seated at a table, upon which are several bottles and tumblers. They drank every few minutes, touched glasses, uttered the vilest imprecations. Conspicuous among them is Marco Graspum: it is enough that we have before introduced him to the

reader at Marston's mansion. His dark peering eyes glisten as he sits holding a glass of liquor in one hand, and runs his fingers through his bristly hair with the other. "The depths of trade are beyond some men," he says, striking his hand on the table; then, catching up a paper, tears it into pieces. "Only follow my directions, and there can be no missing your man," he continued, addressing one who sat opposite to him; and who up to that time had been puffing his cigar with great unconcern. His whole energies seemed roused to action at the word. After keeping his eyes fixed upon Graspum for more than a minute, he replied, at the same time replenishing his cigar with a fresh one—

"Yee'h sees, Marco,—you'r just got to take that ar' say back, or stand an all-fired chaffing. You don't scar' this 'un, on a point a' business. If I hain't larned to put in the big pins, no fellow has. When ye wants to 'sap' a tall 'un, like Marston, ye stands shy until ye thinks he's right for pulling, and then ye'll make a muffin on him, quicker. But, ye likes to have yer own way in gettin' round things, so that a fellow can't stick a pinte to make a hundred or two unless he weaves his way clean through the law—unless he understands *Mr. Justice*, and puts a double blinder on his eye. There's nothing like getting on the right side of a fellow what knows how to get on the wrong side of the law; and seeing how I've studied *Mr. Justice* a little bit better than he's studied his books, I knows just what can be done with him when a feller's got chink in his pocket. You can't buy 'em, sir, they're so modest; but you can coax 'em at a mighty cheaper rate—you can do that! And ye can make him feel as if law and his business warn't two and two,"

rejoined Anthony Romescos, a lean, wiry man, whose small indescribable face, very much sun-scorched, is covered with bright sandy hair, matted and uncombed. His forehead is low, the hair grows nearly to his eyebrows, profuse and red; his eyes wander and glisten with desperation; he is a merciless character. Men fear him, dread him; he sets the law at defiance, laughs when he is told he is the cunningest rogue in the county. He owns to the fearful; says it has served him through many a hard squeeze; but now that he finds law so necessary to carry out villainy, he's taken to studying it himself. His dress is of yellow cotton, of which he has a short roundabout and loose pantaloons. His shirt bosom is open, the collar secured at the neck with a short black ribbon; he is much bedaubed with tobacco-juice, which he has deposited over his clothes for the want of a more convenient place. A gray, slouch hat usually adorns his head, which, in consequence of the thinking it does, needs a deal of scratching. Reminding us how careful he is of his feet, he shows them ensconced in a pair of Indian moccasins ornamented with bead-work; and, as if we had not become fully conscious of his power, he draws aside his roundabout, and there, beneath the waist of his pantaloons, is a girdle, to which a large hunting-knife is attached, some five inches of the handle protruding above the belt. "Now, fellers, I tell ye what's what, ye'r point-up at bragin'; but ye don't come square up to the line when there's anything to put through what wants pluck. 'Tain't what a knowin' 'un like I can do; it's just what he can larn to be with a little training in things requiring spunk. I'm a going to have a square horse, or no horse; if I don't, by the great Davy, I'll back out and do business on my own-

account,—Anthony Romescos always makes his mark and then masters it. If ye don't give Anthony a fair showin', he'll set up business on his own account, and pocket the comins in. Now! thar's Dan Bengal and his dogs; they can do a thing or two in the way of trade now and then; but it requires the cunnin as well as the plucky part of a feller. It makes a great go when they're combined, though,—they ala's makes sure game and slap-up profit."

"Hold a stave, Anthony," interrupted a grim-visaged individual who had just filled his glass with whiskey, which he declared was only to counteract the effect of what he had already taken. He begs they will not think him half so stupid as he seems, says he is always well behaved in genteel society, and is fully convinced from the appearance of things that they are all gentlemen. He wears a semi-bandittical garb, which, with his craven features, presents his character in all its repulsiveness. "You needn't reckon on that courage o' yourn, old fellow; this citizen can go two pins above it. If you wants a showin', just name the mark. I've seed ye times enough,—how ye would not stand ramrod when a nigger looked lightning at ye. Twice I seed a nigger make ye show flum; and ye darn't make the cussed critter toe the line trim up, nohow," he mumbles out, dropping his tumbler on the table, spilling his liquor. They are Graspum's "men;" they move as he directs—carry out his plans of trade in human flesh. Through these promulgators of his plans, his plots, his desperate games, he has become a mighty man of trade. They are all his good fellows—they are worth their weight in gold; but he can purchase their souls for any purpose, at any price!

"Ah, yes, I see—the best I can do don't satisfy. My good fellows, you are plum up on business, do the square thing; but you're becomin' a little too familiar. Doing the nigger business is one thing, and choosing company's another. Remember, gentlemen, I hold a position in society, I do," says Graspum, all the dignity of his dear self glowing in his countenance.

"I see! There's no spoilin' a gentleman what's got to be one by his merits in trade. Thar's whar ye takes the shine out of us. Y'er gentleman gives ye a right smart chance to walk into them ar' big bugs what's careless,—don't think yer comin' it over 'em with a sort a' dignity what don't 'tract no s'picion." rejoined Romescos, taking up his hat, and placing it carelessly on his head, as if to assure Graspum that he is no better than the rest.

"Comprehend me, comprehend me, gentlemen! There can, and must be, dignity in nigger trading; it can be made as honourable as any other branch of business. For there is an intricacy about our business requiring more dignity and ability than general folks know. You fellers couldn't carry out the schemes, run the law down, keep your finger on people's opinion, and them sort a' things, if I didn't take a position in society what 'ud ensure puttin' ye straight through. South's the place where position's worth somethin'; and then, when we acts independent, and don't look as if we cared two toss-ups, ah!"

"I wonder you don't set up a dignity shop, and go to selling the article;—might have it manufactured to sell down south."

"Ah, Romescos," continued Graspum, "you may play the fool; but you must play it wisely to make it profitable.

Here, position puts law at defiance!—here it puts croakers over humanity to rest—here, when it has money, it makes lawyers talk round the points, get fat among themselves, fills the old judge's head with anything; so that he laughs and thinks he don't know nothin'. Listen to what I'm goin' to say, because you'll all make somethin' out on't. I've just got the dignity to do all; and with the coin to back her up, can safe every chance. When you fellers get into a snarl running off a white 'un, or a free nigger, I has to bring out the big talk to make it seem how you didn't understand the thing. 'Tain't the putting the big on, but it's the keepin' on it on. You'd laugh to see how I does it; it's the way I keeps you out of limbo, though."

We have said these men were Graspum's "men;" they are more—they are a band of outlaws, who boast of living in a free country, where its institutions may be turned into despotism. They carry on a system of trade in human bodies; they stain the fairest spots of earth with their crimes. They set law at defiance—they scoff at the depths of hell that yawn for them,—the blackness of their villainy is known only in heaven. Earth cares little for it; and those familiar with the devices of dealers in human bodies shrink from the shame of making them known to the world. There was a discontent in the party, a clashing of interests, occasioned by the meagre manner in which Graspum had divided the spoils of their degradation. He had set his dignity and position in society at a much higher value than they were willing to recognise,—especially when it was to share the spoils in proportion. Dan Bengal so called from his ferocity of character, was a celebrated dog-trainer and negro-hunter, "was great in doing the

savager portion of negro business." This, Romescos contended, did not require so much cunning as his branch of the business—which was to find "loose places," where *doubtful* whites observe remnants of the Indian race, and free negroes could be found easy objects of prey; to lay plots, do the "sharp," carry out plans for running all free *rubbish* down south, where they would sell for something.

"True! it's all true as sunshine," says Romescos; "we understand Mr. Graspum inside and out. But ye ain't paid a dime to get me out of any scrape. I was larned to nigger business afore I got into the 'tarnal thing; and when I just gits me eye on a nigger what nobody don't own, I comes the sly over him—puts him through a course of nigger diplomacy. The way he goes down to the Mississippi is a caution to nigger property!"

He has enlisted their attention, all eyes are set upon him, every voice calls out to know his process. He begs they will drink round; they fill their glasses, and demand that he will continue the interest of his story.

"My plans are worth a fortune to those who follow the business," he says, giving his glass a twirl as he sets it upon the table, and commences—

"Born 'cute, you see; trade comes natural. Afore a free 'un don't know it, I has him bonded and tucked off for eight or nine hundred dollars, slap-up, cash and all. And then, ye sees, it's worth somethin' in knowin' who to sell such criturs too—so that the brute don't git a chance to talk about it without getting his back troubled. And then, it requires as much knowin' as a senator's got just to fix things as smooth so nobody won't know it; and just like ye can jingle the coin in yer pocket, for the nigger, what

everybody's wonderin' where he can be gone to. I tell ye what, it takes some stameny to keep the price of a prime feller in your pocket, and wonder, along with the rest, whare the rascal can be. If you'd just see Bob Osmand doe it up, you'd think his face was made for a methodist deacon in camp meeting-time. The way he comes it when he wants to prove a free nigger's a runaway, would beat all the disciples of Blackstone between here and old Kentuck. And then, Bob's any sort of a gentleman, what you don't get in town every day, and wouldn't make a bad senator, if he'd bin in Congress when the compromise was settled upon,—'cos he can reason right into just nothin' at all. Ye see it ain't the feelings that makes a feller a gentleman in our business, it's knowing the human natur 'a things; how to be a statesman, when ye meets the like, how to be a gentleman, and talk polite things, and sich like; how to be a jolly fellow, an' put the tall sayings into the things of life; and when ye gets among the lawyers, to know all about the pintes of the law, and how to cut off the corners, so they'll think ye're bin a parish judge. And then, when ye comes before the squire, just to talk dignity to him—tell him where the law is what he don't seem to comprehend. You've got to make a right good feller of the squire by sticking a fee under his vest-pocket when he don't obsarve it. And then, ye know, when ye make the squire a right good feller, you must keep him to the point; and when there's any swarin' to be done, he's just as easily satisfied as the law. It's all business, you see; and thar's just the same kind a thing in it; because profit rules principle, and puts a right smart chance a' business into their hands without troubling their consciences. But then, Bob ain't

got the cunnin' in him like I—nor he can't "*rope-in* on the sly,"—knock down and drag out, and just tell a whole possee to come on, as I do. And that's what ye don't seem to come at, Graspum," said Romescos, again filling his glass, and drawing a long black pipe from his pocket prepares it for a smoke.

"Now, the trouble is, you all think you can carry out these matters on your own hook; but it's no go, and you'll find it so. It's a scheme that must have larger means at the head of it; and each man's rights must be stipulated, and paid according to his own enterprise. But this discontent is monstrous and injurious, and if continued will prove unprofitable. You see, fellers, you've no responsibility, and my position is your protection, and if you don't get rich you must not charge the blame to me; and then just see how you live now to what you did when ranging the piny woods and catching a stray nigger here and there, what didn't hardly pay dog money. There's a good deal in the sport of the thing, too; and ye know it amounts to a good deal to do the gentleman and associate with big folks, who puts the business into one's hands, by finding out whose got lean purses and prime niggers," rejoined Graspum, very coolly.

"Ah, yes; that's the way ye comes it over these haristocrats, by doin' the modest. Now, Graspum, 'tain't no trouble to leak a sap like that Lorenzo, and make his friends stand the blunt after we've roped him into your fixings," replied Romescos.

"No, no; not a bit of it," resounded several voices. "We do all the dragwork with the niggers, and Graspum gets the tin."

"But he pays for the drink. Come, none of this bicker-

ing; we must agree upon business, and do the thing up brown under the old system," interrupted another.

"Hold! close that bread trap a' yourn," Romescos shouts at the top of his voice. "You're only a green croaker from the piny woods, where gophers crawl independent; you ain't seen life on the borders of Texas. Fellers, I can whip any man in the crowd,—can make the best stump speech, can bring up the best logic; and can prove that the best frightenin' man is the best man in the nigger business. Now, if you wants a brief sketch of this child's history, ye can have it." Here Romescos entered into an interesting account of himself. He was the descendant of a good family, living in the city of Charleston; his parents, when a youth, had encouraged his propensities for bravery. Without protecting them with that medium of education which assimilates courage with gentlemanly conduct, carrying out the nobler impulses of our nature, they allowed him to roam in that sphere which produces its ruffians. At the age of fifteen he entered a counting-room, when his quick mercurial temperament soon rendered him expert at its minor functions. Three years had hardly elapsed when, in a moment of passion, he drew his dirk, (a weapon he always carried) and, in making a plunge at his antagonist, inflicted a wound in the breast of a near friend. The wound was deep, and proved fatal. For this he was arraigned before a jury, tried for his life. He proved the accident by an existing friendship—he was honourably acquitted. His employer, after reproaching him for his proceedings, again admitted him into his employment. Such, however, was his inclination to display the desperado, that before the expiration of another year he killed a negro, shot two balls at one of his

fellows, one of which was well nigh proving fatal, and left the state. His recklessness, his previous acts of malignity, his want of position, all left him little hope of escaping the confines of a prison. Fleeing to parts unknown, his absence relieved the neighbourhood of a responsibility. For a time, he roamed among farmers and drovers in the mountains of Tennissee; again he did menial labour, often forced to the direst necessity to live. One day, when nearly famished, he met a slave-driver, conducting his *coffle* towards the Mississippi, to whom he proffered his services. The coarse driver readily accepted them; they proceeded on together, and it was not long before they found themselves fitting companions. The one was desperate—the other traded in desperation. An ardent nature, full of courage and adventure, was a valuable acquisition to the dealer, who found that he had enlisted a youngster capable of relieving him of inflicting that cruelty so necessary to his profession. With a passion for inflicting torture, this youth could now gratify it upon those unfortunate beings of merchandise who were being driven to the shambles: he could gloat in the exercise of those natural propensities which made the infliction of pain a pleasant recreation. In the trade of human flesh all these cruel traits became valuable; they enabled him to demand a good price for his services. Initiated in all the mysteries of the trade, he was soon entrusted with gangs of very considerable extent; then he made purchases, laid plans to entrap free negroes, performed the various intricacies of procuring affidavits with which to make slave property out of free flesh. Nature was nature, and what was hard in him soon became harder; he could crib "doubtful white stuff" that was a nuisance among folks, and sell

it for something he could put in his pocket. In this way Romescos accumulated several hundred dollars; but avarice increased, and with it his ferocity. It belonged to the trade, a trade of wanton depravity. He became the terror of those who assumed to look upon a negro's sufferings with sympathy, scoffing at the finer feelings of mankind. Twice had his rapacity been let loose—twice had it nearly brought him to the gallows, or to the tribunal of Judge Lynch. And now, when completely enured in the traffic of human flesh,—that traffic which transposes man into a demon, his progress is checked for a while by a false step.

It was this; and this only to the deep disgrace of the freest and happiest country on earth. A poor orphan girl, like many of her class in our hospitable slave world, had been a mere cast-off upon the community. She knew nothing of the world, was ignorant, could neither read nor write,—*something* quite common in the south, but seldom known in New England. Thus she became the associate of depraved negroes, and again, served Romescos as a victim. Not content with this, after becoming tired of her, he secured her in the slave-pen of one of his fellow traders. Here he kept her for several weeks, closely confined, feeding her with grits. Eventually "running" her to Vicksburg, he found an accomplice to sign a bill of sale, by which he sold her to a notorious planter, who carried her into the interior. The wretched girl had qualities which the planter saw might, with a little care, be made extremely valuable in the New Orleans market,—one was natural beauty. She was not suitable property for the agricultural department of either a cotton or sugar plantation, nor was she "the stripe" to increase prime stock;

hence she must be prepared for the general market. When qualified according to what the planter knew would suit the fancy market, she was conveyed to New Orleans, a piece of property bright as the very brightest, very handsome, not very intelligent,—just suited to the wants of bidders.

Here, at the shambles in the crescent city, she remained guarded, and for several weeks was not allowed to go beyond the door-sill; after which a sale was effected of her with the keeper of a brothel, for the good price of thirteen hundred dollars. In this sink of iniquity she remained nearly two years. Fearing the ulterior consequences, she dared not assert her rights to freedom, she dared not say she was born free in a free country. Her disappearance from the village in which she had been reared caused some excitement; but it soon reduced itself to a very trifling affair. Indeed, white trash like this was considered little else than rubbish, not worth bringing up respectably. And while suspicion pointed to Romescos, as the person who could account for her mysterious disappearance, such was the fear of his revenge that no one dared be the accuser. Quietly matters rested, poor virtue was mean merchandise, had its value, could be bought and sold—could be turned to various uses, except enlisting the sympathies of those who study it as a market commodity. A few days passed and all was hushed; no one enquired about the poor orphan, Martha Johnson. In the hands of her creole owner, who held her as a price for licentious purposes, she associated with *gentlemen* of polite manners—of wealth and position. Even this, though profane, had advantages, which she employed for the best of purposes; she learned to read and to write,—to assimilate her feelings with those of a

higher class. Society had degraded her, she had not degraded herself. One night, as the promiscuous company gathered into the drawing-room, she recognised a young man from her native village; the familiar face inspired her with joy, her heart leaped with gladness; he had befriended her poor mother—she knew he had kind feelings, and would be her friend once her story was told. The moments passed painfully; she watched him restlessly through the dance,—sat at his side. Still he did not recognise her,—toilet had changed her for another being; but she had courted self-respect rather than yielded to degradation. Again she made signs to attract his attention; she passed and repassed him, and failed. Have I thus changed, she thought to herself.

At length she succeeded in attracting his attention; she drew him aside, then to her chamber. In it she disclosed her touching narrative, unfolded her sorrows, appealed to him with tears in her eyes to procure her freedom and restore her to her rights. Her story enlisted the better feelings of a man, while her self-respect, the earnestness with which she pleaded her deliverance, and the heartlessness of the act, strongly rebuked the levity of those who had made her an orphan outcast in her own village. She was then in the theatre of vice, surrounded by its allurements, consigned to its degradation, a prey to libertinism —yet respecting herself. The object of his visit among the denizens was changed to a higher mission, a duty which he owed to his moral life,—to his own manliness. He promised his mediation to better her eventful and mysterious life, to be a friend to her; and nobly did he keep his promise. On the following day he took measures for her

rescue, and though several attempts were made to wrest her from him, and the mendacity of slave-dealers summoned to effect it, he had the satisfaction of seeing her restored to her native village,—to freedom, to respectability.*

Proceedings were after some delay commenced against Romescos, but, (we trust it was not through collusion with officials), he escaped the merited punishment that would have been inflicted upon him by a New England tribunal. Again he left the state, and during his absence it is supposed he was engaged in nefarious practices with the notorious Murrel, who carried rapine and death into the unoffending villages of the far west. However, be this as it may, little was known of him for several years, except in some desperate encounter. The next step in his career of desperation known, was joining a band of *guerillos* led by one of the most intrepid captains that infested the borders of Mexico, during the internal warfare by which her Texan provinces struggled for independence. Freebooters, they espoused the Texan cause because it offered food for their rapacity, and through it they became formidable and desperate foes to the enemy. They were the terror of the *ranchoes*, the inhabitants fled at their approach; their pillage, rapine, and slaughtering, would stain the annals of barbarous Africa. They are buried, let us hope for the name of a great nation, that they may remain beneath the pale of oblivion.

* We withhold the details of this too true transaction, lest we should be classed among those who are endeavouring to create undue excitement. The orphan girl we here refer to was married to a respectable mechanic, who afterwards removed to Cincinnati, and with his wife became much respected citizens.

In their incursions, as mounted riflemen, they besieged villages, slaughtered the inhabitants, plundered churches, and burned dwellings; they carried off captive females, drove herds of cattle to distant markets. Through the auspices of this band, as is now well known, many young females were carried off and sold into slavery, where they and their offspring yet remain. While pursuing this nefarious course of life, Romescos accumulated more than twenty thousand dollars; and yet,—though ferocity increased with the daring of his profession,—there was one impulse of his nature, deeply buried, directing his ambition. Amid the dangers of war, the tumult of conflict, the passion for daring—this impulse kept alive the associations of home,—it was love! In early life he had formed an attachment for a beautiful young lady of his native town; it had ripened with his years; the thoughts of her, and the hope of regaining her love if he gained wealth, so worked upon his mind that he resolved to abandon the life of a *guerillo,* and return home. After an absence of fourteen years he found the object of his early love,—that woman who had refused to unite her affection,—a widow, having buried her husband, a gentleman of position, some months previous.

Romescos had money,—the man was not considered; he is not considered where slavery spreads its vices to corrupt social life. He had been careful to keep his business a profound secret, and pressing his affections, soon found the object of his ambition keenly sensitive to his advances. Rumour recounted his character with mystery and suspicion; friends remonstrated, but in vain; they were united despite all opposition, all appeals. For a time he seemed a

better man, the business he had followed harassed his mind, loathed about him as if poisoning his progress. He purchased a plantation on the banks of the Santee; for once resolved to pursue an honest course, to be a respectable citizen, and enjoy the quiet of home.

A year passed: he might have enjoyed the felicity of domestic life, the affections of a beautiful bride; but the change was too sudden for his restless spirit. He was not made to enjoy the quiet of life, the task stood before him like a mountain without a pass, he could not wean himself from the vices of a marauder. He had abused the free offerings of a free country, had set law at defiance; he had dealt in human flesh, and the task of resistance was more than the moral element in his nature could attain. Violations of human laws were mere speculations to him; they had beguiled him, body and soul. He had no apology for violating personal feeling; what cared he for that small consideration, when the bodies of men, women, and children could be sacrificed for that gold which would give him position among the men of the south. If he carried off poor whites, and sold them into slavery, he saw no enormity in the performance; the law invested him with power he made absolute. Society was chargeable with all his wrongs, with all his crimes, all his enormities. He had repeatedly told it so, pointing for proof to that literal observance of the rule by which man is made mere merchandise. Society had continued in its pedantic folly, disregarding legal rights, imposing no restraints on the holder of human property, violating its spirit and pride by neglecting to enforce the great principles of justice whereby we are bound to protect the lives of those unjustly considered

inferior beings. Thus ends a sketch of what Romescos gave of his own career.

We now find him associated with the desperadoes of slave-dealing, in the scene we have presented. After Romescos had related what he called the romance of his life,—intended, no doubt, to impress the party with his power and intrepidity, and enable him to set a higher value upon his services,—he lighted a pipe, threw his hat upon the floor, commenced pacing up and down the room, as if labouring under deep excitement. And while each one seemed watching him intently, a loud knocking was heard at the door,—then the baying of blood-hounds, the yelps of *curs*, mingling with the murmurs of those poor wretches confined in the cells beneath. Then followed the clanking of chains, cries, and wailings, startling and fearful.

Dan Bengal sprang to the door, as if conscious of its import. A voice demanded admittance; and as the door opened Bengal exclaimed, "Halloo!—here's Nath Nimrod: what's the tune of the adventure?"

A short, stout man entered, dressed in a coarse homespun hunting dress, a profuse black beard and moustache nearly covering his face. "I is'nt so bad a feller a'ter all —is I?" he says, rushing forward into the centre of the room, followed by four huge hounds. They were noble animals, had more instinctive gentleness than their masters, displayed a knowledge of the importance of the prize they had just gained.

"Hurrah for Nath! hurrah! hurrah! hurrah, for Nath! You got him, Nath—did'nt ye?" resounded from several tongues, and was followed by a variety of expressions highly complimentary to his efficiency.

Romescos, however, remained silent, pacing the floor unconcerned, except in his own anxiety—as if nothing had occurred to disturb him. Advancing to the table, the new visitor, his face glowing with exultation, held forth, by the crispy hair, the blanched and bloody head of an unfortunate negro who had paid the penalty of the State's allowance for outlaws. "There: beat that, who can? Four hundred dollars made since breakfast;" he cries out at the top of his voice. They cast a measured look at the ghastly object, as if it were a precious ornament, much valued for the price it would bring, according to law. The demon expresses his joy, descants on his expertness and skill, holds up his prize again, turns it round, smiles upon it as his offering, then throws it into the fire place, carelessly, like a piece of fuel. The dogs spring upon it, as if the trophy was for their feast; but he repulses them; dogs are not so bad after all (the canine is often the better of the two), the morsel is too precious for canine dogs,—human dogs must devour it. "There is nothing like a free country, nothing; and good business, when it's well protected by law," says Nimrod, seating himself at the table, filling a glass, bowing to his companions, drinking to the health of his friends. He imagines himself the best fellow of the lot. Taking Graspum by the hand, he says, "there is a clear hundred for you, old patron!" pulls an Executive proclamation from his pocket, and points to where it sets forth the amount of reward for the outlaw—dead or alive. "I know'd whar the brute had his hole in the swamp," he continues: "and I summed up the resolution to bring him out. And then the gal a Ginral Brinkle's, if I could pin her, would be a clear fifty more, provided I could catch her without damage, and

twenty-five if the dogs havocked her shins. There was no trouble in getting the fifty, seeing how my dogs were trained to the point and call. Taste or no taste, they come square off at the word. To see the critters trace a nigger, you'd think they had human in them; they understands it so! But, I tell you what, it's one thing to hunt a gal nigger, and another to run down an outlaw what as had two or three years in the swamp. The catching him's not much, but when ye have to slide the head off, all the pious in yer natur comes right up to make yer feelings feel kind a softish. However, the law protects ye, and the game being only a nigger, different rules and things govern one's feelings."

Bengal interrupts by laconically insinuating (raising his moody face, and winking at Graspum). that it were all moonshine to talk about trouble in that kind of business; "It's the very highest of exhilarating sport!" he concludes emphatically.

"Dan!" returns the other, with a fierce stare, as he seizes the bottle and is about to enjoy a glass of whisky uninvited; "let your liquor stop your mouth. I set the whole pack upon the trail at daylight, and in less than two hours they came upon him, bolted him, and put him to the river. The leader nabbed him about half way across, but the chap, instead of giving in, turned and fought like a hero. Twice I thought he would whip the whole pack, but the way they made the rags fly warn't nobody's business. Well, I just come up with him as he plunged into the stream, lifts old sure mark, as gives him about a dozen plugs; and then the old feller begged just so, you'd thought he was a Christian pleadin forgiveness at the last moment. But,

when I seizes him and gives him three or four levellers with the but of the rifle, ye never saw a sarpent plunge, and struggle, and warp so. Says I, 'It's no use, old feller,—yer might as well give her up;' and the way his eyes popped, just as if he expected I war'nt goin to finish him. I tell ye, boys, it required some spunk about then, for the critter got his claws upon me with a death grip, and the dogs ripped him like an old corn stalk, and would'nt keep off.. And then there was no fracturin his skull; and seeing how he was overpowering me, I just seizes him by the throat and pops his head off quicker than a Chinese executioner.*

"Now, thar' war'nt so much in takin' the gal, cos jist when she see'd the dogs comin', the critter took to tree and gin right up: but when I went to muzlin' on her, so she could'nt scream, then she gets saucy; and I promised to gin her bricks,—which, fellers, I reckon yer must take a hand in so the brute won't wake the neighbours; and I'll do'e it afore I sleeps," said Nimrod, getting up from the table and playfully touching Ramescos upon the arm. "I see ye ain't brightened to-day—Graspum's share don't seem to suit yer, old feller; ah! ah!!" he continued.

"Just put another ten per cent. upon the out-lining, and running free 'uns, and I'll stand flint," said Romescos, seeming to be acted upon by a sudden change of feelings, as he turned to Graspum, with a look of anxiety.

"Very well," returned Graspum. "Yer see, there's that Marston affair to be brought to a point; and his affairs are just in such a fix that he don't know what's what, nor

* The author has given the language of the slave-hunter who related the case personally.

who's who. Ther'll have to be some tall swearing done in that case afore it's brought to the hammer. That cunning of yours, Romescos, will just come into play in this case. It'll be just the thing to do the crooked and get round the legal points." Thus Graspum, with the dignity and assurance of a gentleman, gave his opinion, drank with his companions, and withdrew for the night.

Romescos, Bengal, and Nimrod, soon after descended into the vaults below, followed by a negro bearing a lantern. Here they unbolted one of the cells, dragged forth a dejected-looking mulatto woman, her rags scarcely covering her nakedness. The poor wretch, a child born to degradation and torture, whose cries were heard in heaven, heaved a deep sigh, then gave vent to a flood of tears. They told how deep was her anguish, how she struggled against injustice, how sorrow was burning her very soul. The outpourings of her feelings might have aroused the sympathies of savage hearts; but the slave monsters were unmoved. Humbleness, despair, and even death, sat upon her very countenance; hope had fled her, left her a wreck for whom man had no pity. And though her prayers ascended to heaven, the God of mercy seemed to have abandoned her to her tormentors. She came forward trembling and reluctantly, her countenance changed; she gave a frowning look at her tormentors, wild and gloomy, shrank back into the cell, the folds of straight, black hair hanging about her shoulders.

"Come out here!" Nimrod commands in an angry tone; then, seizing her by the arm, dragged her forth, and jerked her prostrate on the ground. Here, like as many fiends in human form, the rest fell upon her, held her flat to the floor

by the hands and feet, her face downwards, while Nimrod, with a raw hide, inflicted thirty lashes on her bare back. Her cries and groans, as she lay writhing, the flesh hanging in quivering shreds, and lifting with the lash,—her appeals for mercy, her prayers to heaven, her fainting moans as the agony of her torture stung into her very soul, would have touched a heart of stone. But, though her skin had not defiled her in the eyes of the righteous, there was none to take pity on her, nor to break the galling chains; no! the punishment was inflicted with the measured coolness of men engaged in an every-day vocation. It was simply the right which a democratic law gave men to become lawless, fierce in the conspiracy of wrong, and where the legal excitement of trafficking in the flesh and blood of one another sinks them unconsciously into demons.

CHAPTER VII.

"BUCKRA-MAN VERY UNCERTAIN."

THE capt'on, a common saying among negroes at the south, had its origin in a consciousness, on the part of the negro, of the many liabilities to which his master's affairs are subject, and his own dependence on the ulterior consequences. It carries with it a deep significance, opens a field for reflection, comprehends the negro's knowledge of his own uncertain state, his being a piece of property the good or evil of which is effected by his master's caprices, the binding force of the law that makes him merchandise. Nevertheless, while the negro feels them in all their force, the master values them only in an abstract light. Ask the negro whose master is kind to him, if he would prefer his freedom and go north ?—At first he will hesitate, dilate upon his master's goodness, his affection for him, the kindly feeling evinced for him by the family—(they often look upon him with a patriarchal tenderness)—and, finally, he will conclude by telling you he wishes master and missus would live for ever. He tells you, in the very simplicity of his nature, that "Eve' ting so unsartin! and mas'r don't know if he die when he gwine to." That when he is dying he does not realise it; and though his intention be good, death may blot out his desires, and he, the dependent, being only a chattel, must sink into the uncertain stream of slave-life. Marston's

plantation might have been taken as an illustration of the truth of this saying. Long had it been considered one of eminent profit; his field slaves were well cared for; his favourite house servants had every reasonable indulgence granted them. And, too, Marston's mansion was the pleasant retreat of many a neighbour, whose visits were welcomed by the kindly attention he had taught his domestics to bestow. Marston's fault lay in his belonging to that class of planters who repose too much confidence in others.

The morning following Lorenzo's departure ushered forth bright and balmy. A quiet aspect reigned in and about the plantation, servants moved sluggishly about, the incidents of the preceding night oppressed Marston's mind; his feelings broke beyond his power of restraint. Like contagion, the effect seized each member of his household,—forcibly it spoke in word and action! Marston had bestowed much care upon Lorenzo and Franconia; he had indulged and idolised the latter, and given the former some good advice. But advice without example seldom produces lasting good; in truth, precept had the very worst effect upon Lorenzo,—it had proved his ruin! His singular and mysterious departure might for a time be excused,—even accounted for in some plausible manner, but suspicion was a stealing monster that would play upon the deeply tinctured surface, and soar above in disgrace. That the Rovero family were among the first of the State would not be received as a palliation; they had suffered reverses of fortune, and, with the addition of Lorenzo's profligacy, which had been secretly drawing upon their resources, were themselves well nigh in discredit. And now that this sudden and

unexpected reverse had befallen Marston, he could do nothing for their relief. Involved, perplexed, and distrusted —with ever-slaying suspicion staring him in the face—he was a victim pursued by one who never failed to lay low his object. That man moved with unerring method, could look around him upon the destitution made by his avarice, without evincing a shadow of sympathy. Yes! he was in the grasp of a living Shylock, whose soul, worn out in the love of gold, had forgotten that there existed a distinction between right and wrong.

Surrounded by all these dark forebodings, Marston begins to reflect on his past life. He sees that mercy which overlooks the sins of man when repentance is pure; but his life is full of moral blemishes; he has sinned against the innocent, against the God of forgiveness. The inert of his nature is unfolding itself,—he has lived according to the tolerated vices of society—he has done no more than the law gave him a right to do! And yet, that very society, overlooking its own wrongs, would now strip him of its associations. He lives in a State where it is difficult to tell what society will approve or reprobate; where a rich man may do with impunity what would consign a poor man to the gallows.* The creatures whom he had made mere objects to serve his sensuality were before him; he traced

* If we examine the many rencontres that take place in the south, especially those proving fatal, we will find that the perpetrator, if he be a rich man, invariably receives an "*honourable acquittal.*" Again, when the man of *position* shoots down his victim in the streets of a city, he is esteemed brave; but a singular reversion takes place if the rencontre be between poor men. It is then a diabolical act, a murder, which nothing short of the gallows can serve for punishment.

the gloomy history of their unfortunate sires; he knew that Ellen and Clotilda were born free. The cordon that had bound his feelings to the system of slavery relaxed. For the first time, he saw that which he could not recognise in his better nature—himself the medium of keeping human beings in slavery who were the rightful heirs of freedom. The blackness of the crime—its cruelty, its injustice—haunted him; they were at that very moment held by Graspum's caprice. He might doom the poor wretches to irretrievable slavery, to torture and death! Then his mind wandered to Annette and Nicholas; he saw them of his own flesh and blood; his natural affections bounded forth; how could he disown them? The creations of love and right were upon him, misfortune had unbound his sensations; his own offspring stood before him clothed in trouble thick and dangerous. His follies have entailed a life-rent of misery upon others; the fathomless depth of the future opens its yawning jaws to swallow up those upon whom the fondness of a father should have been bestowed for their moral and physical good.

As he sits contemplating this painful picture, Aunt Rachel enters the room to inquire if Lorenzo breakfasts with them. "Why! old mas'r, what ail ye dis mornin'? Ye don't seems nohow. Not a stripe like what ye was yesterday; somethin' gi 'h de wrong way, and mas'r done know what i' is," she mutters to herself, looking seriously at Marston.

"Nothing! old bustler; nothing that concerns you. Do not mention Lorenzo's name again; he has gone on a journey. Send my old faithful Daddy Bob to me." Rachel hastened to fulfil the command; soon brought the old servant

to the door. His countenance lighted up with smiles as he stood at the doorway, bowing and scraping, working his red cap in his hand. There stood the old man, a picture of attachment.

"Come in, Bob, come in!" Marston says, motioning his hand, "I wish the world was as faithful as you are. You are worthy the indulgence I have bestowed upon you; let me hope there is something better in prospect for you. My life reproves me; and when I turn and review its crooked path—when I behold each inconsistency chiding me—I lament what I cannot recall." Taking the old man by the hand, the tears glistening in his eyes, he looks upon him as a father would his child.

"In a short time, Bob, you shall be free to go where you please, on the plantation or off it. But remember, Bob, you are old—you have grown grey in faithfulness,—the good southerner is the true friend of the negro! I mean he is the true friend of the negro, because he has associated with him from childhood, assimilated with his feelings, made his nature a study. He welcomes him without reserve, approaches him without that sensitiveness and prejudice which the northerner too often manifests towards him. You shall be free, Bob! you shall be free!—free to go where you please; but you must remain among southerners, southerners are your friends."

"Yes, mas'r, 'im all just so good, if t'warn't dat I so old. Free nigger, when 'e old, don't gwane to get along much. Old Bob tink on dat mighty much, he do dat! Lef Bob free win 'e young, den 'e get tru' de world like Buckra, only lef 'im de chance what Buckra hab. Freedom ain't wof' much ven old Bob worn out, mas'r; and Buckra what

sell nigger,—what make 'e trade on him, run 'im off sartin. He sell old nigger what got five dollar wof' a work in 'e old bones. Mas'r set 'um free, bad Buckra catch 'um, old Bob get used up afo' he know nofin," quaintly replied the old man, seeming to have an instinctive knowledge of the "nigger trade," but with so much attachment for his master that he could not be induced to accept his freedom.

"It's not the leaving me, Bob; you may be taken from me. You are worth but little, 'tis true, and yet you may be sold from me to a bad master. If the slave-dealers run you off, you can let me know, and I will prosecute them," returned Marston.

"Ah! mas'r; dat's just whar de blunt is—in de unsartainty! How I gwane to let mas'r know, when mas'r no larn nigger to read," he quickly responded. There is something in his simple remark that Marston has never before condescended to contemplate,—something the simple nature of the negro has just disclosed; it lies deeply rooted at the foundation of all the wrongs of slavery. Education would be valuable to the negro, especially in his old age; it would soften his impulses rather than impair his attachment, unless the master be a tyrant fearing the results of his own oppression. Marston, a good master, had deprived the old man of the means of protecting himself against the avarice of those who would snatch him from freedom, and while his flesh and blood contained dollars and cents, sell him into slavery. Freedom, under the best circumstances, could do him little good in his old age; and yet, a knowledge of the wrong rankled deep in Marston's feelings: he could relieve it only by giving Daddy Bob and Harry their freedom if they would accept it.

Relinquishing Daddy's hand, he commanded him to go and bring him Annette and Nicholas. "Bring them," he says, "without the knowledge of their mothers." Bob withdrew, hastened to the cabins in the yard to fulfil the mission. Poor things, thought Marston; they are mine, how can I disown them? Ah, there's the point to conquer—I cannot! It is like the mad torrents of hell, stretched out before me to consume my very soul, to bid me defiance. Misfortune is truly a great purifier, a great regenerator of our moral being; but how can I make the wrong right?—how can I live to hope for something beyond the caprice of this alluring world? My frailties have stamped their future with shame.

Thus he mused as the children came scampering into the room. Annette, her flaxen curls dangling about her neck, looking as tidy and bright as the skill of Clotilda could make her, runs to Marston, throws herself on his knee, fondles about his bosom, kisses his hand again and again. She loves him,—she knows no other father. Nicholas, more shy, moves slowly behind a chair, his fingers in his mouth the while. Looking through its rounds wistfully, he shakes his head enviously, moves the chair backwards and forwards, and is too bashful to approach Annette's position.

Marston has taken Annette in his arms, he caresses her; she twirls her tiny fingers through his whiskers, as if to play with him in the toying recognition of a father. He is deeply immersed in thought, smoothes her hair, walks to the glass with her in his arms, holds her before it as if to detect his own features in the countenance of the child. Resuming his seat, he sets her on one knee, calls Nicholas to him, takes him on the other, and fondles them with an air of

kindness it had never before been their good fortune to receive at his hands. He looked upon them again, and again caressed them, parted their hair with his fingers. And as Annette would open her eyes and gaze in his, with an air of sweetest acknowledgment, his thoughts seemed contending with something fearful. He was in trouble; he saw the enemy brooding over the future; he heaved a sigh, a convulsive motion followed, a tear stealing down his cheek told the tale of his reflections.

"Now, Daddy;" he speaks, directing himself to old Bob, who stands at the door surprised at Marston's singular movements, "you are my confidant, what do you think the world—I mean the people about the district, about the city—would say if they knew these were mine? You know, Bob,—you must tell me straight out, do they look like me?—have they features like mine?" he inquires with rapid utterance.

"Mas'r, Bob don' like to say all he feels," meekly muttered the old man.

"There is the spot on which we lay the most unholy blot; and yet, it recoils upon us when we least think. Unfortunate wretches bear them unto us; yet we dare not make them our own; we blast their lives for selfish ends, yield them to others, shield ourselves by a misnomer called right! We sell the most interesting beings for a price,—beings that should be nearest and dearest to our hearts."

The old slave's eyes glistened with excitement; he looked on astonished, as if some extraordinary scene had surprised him. As his agitation subsided, he continued, "Mas'r, I bin watch 'im dis long time. Reckon how nobody wouldn't

take 'em fo'h nobody else's—fo'h true! Dar ain't no spozin' bout 'em, 'e so right smart twarn't no use to guise 'em: da'h just like old Boss. Mas'r, nigger watch dem tings mighty close; more close den Buckra, cos' Buckra tink 'e all right when nigger tink 'e all wrong."

Marston is not quite content with this: he must needs put another question to the old man. "You are sure there can be no mistaking them for mine?" he rejoins, fixing his eyes upon the children with an almost death-like stare, as Daddy leads them out of the room. The door closes after them, he paces the room for a time, seats himself in his chair again, and is soon absorbed in contemplation. "I must do something for them—I must snatch them from the jaws of danger. They are full of interest—they are mine; there is not a drop of negro blood in their veins, and yet the world asks *who* are their mothers, what is their history? Ah! yes; in that history lies the canker that has eaten out the living springs of many lives. It is that which cuts deepest. Had I known myself, done what I might have done before it was too late, kindness would have its rewards; but I am fettered, and the more I move the worse for them. Custom has laid the foundation of wrong, the law protects it, and a free government tolerates a law that shields iniquities blackening earth." In this train of thought his mind wandered. He would send the children into a free state, there to be educated; that they may live in the enjoyment of those rights with which nature had blest them. The obstacles of the law again stared him in the face; the wrong by which they were first enslaved, now forgotten, had brought its climax.

Suddenly arousing from his reverie, he started to his feet, and walking across the floor, exclaimed in an audible voice, "I will surmount all difficulties,—I will recognise them as my children; I will send them where they may become ornaments of society, instead of living in shame and licentiousness. This is my resolve, and I will carry it out, or die!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A CLOUD OF MISFORTUNE HANGS OVER THE PLANTATION.

THE document Marston signed for Lorenzo (to release him from the difficulties into which he had been drawn by Graspum), guaranteed the holder against all loss. This, in the absence of Lorenzo, and under such strange circumstances, implied an amount which might be increased according to the will of the man into whose hands he had so unfortunately fallen.

Nearly twelve months had now elapsed since the disclosure of the crime. Maxwell, our young Englishman, had spent the time among the neighbouring plantations; and failing to enlist more than friendly considerations from Franconia, resolved to return to Bermuda and join his family. He had, however, taken a deep interest in Clotilda and Annette,—had gone to their apartment unobserved, and in secret interviews listened to Clotilda's tale of trouble. Its recital enlisted his sympathies; and being of an ardent and impressible temper, he determined to carry out a design for her relief. He realised her silent suffering,—saw how her degraded condition wrangled with her noble feelings,—how the true character of a woman loathed at being the slave of one who claimed her as his property. And this, too, without the hope of redeeming herself, except by some desperate effort. And, too, he saw but little difference

between the blood of Franconia and the blood of Clotilda; the same outline of person was there,—her delicate countenance, finely moulded bust, smoothly converging shoulders There was the same Grecian cast of face, the same soft, reflective eyes,—filling a smile with sweetness, and again with deep-felt sorrow. The same sensitive nature, ready to yield forth love and tenderness, or to press onward the more impassioned affections, was visible in both. And yet, what art had done for Franconia nature had replenished for Clotilda. But, the servile hand was upon her, she crouched beneath its grasp; it branded her life, and that of her child, with ignominy and death.

During these interviews he would watch her emotions as she looked upon her child; when she would clasp it to her bosom, weeping, until from the slightest emotion her feelings would become frantic with anguish.

"And you, my child, a mother's hope when all other pleasures are gone! Are you some day to be torn from me, and, like myself, sent to writhe under the coarse hand of a slave-dealer, to be stung with shame enforced while asking God's forgiveness? Sometimes I think it cannot be so; I think it must all be a dream. But it is so, and we might as well submit, say as little of the hardship as possible, and think it's all as they tell us—according to God's will," she would say, pressing the child closer and closer to her bosom, the agitation of her feelings rising into convulsions as the tears coursed down her cheeks. Then she would roll her soft eyes upwards, her countenance filling with despair. The preservation of her child was pictured in the depth of her imploring look. For a time her emotions would recede into quiet,—she would smile placidly

upon Annette, forget the realities that had just swept her mind into such a train of trouble.

One night, as Maxwell entered her apartment, he found her kneeling at her bed-side, supplicating in prayer. The word, "Oh, God; not me, but my child—guide her through the perils that are before her, and receive her into heaven at last," fell upon his ear. He paused, gazed upon her as if some angel spirit had touched the tenderest chord of his feelings—listened unmoved. A lovely woman, an affectionate mother, the offspring of a noble race, (herself forced by relentless injustice to become an instrument of licentiousness), stood before him in all that can make woman an ornament to her sex. What to Ellen Juvarna seemed the happiness of her lot, was pain and remorse to Clotilda; and when she arose there was a nervousness, a shrinking in her manner, betokening apprehension. "It is not now; it is hereafter. And yet there is no glimmer of hope!" she whispers, as she seats herself in a chair, pulls the little curtain around the bed, and prepares to retire.

The scene so worked upon Maxwell's feelings that he could withstand the effect no longer; he approached her, held out his hand, greeted her with a smile: "Clotilda, I am your friend," he whispers, "come, sit down and tell me what troubles you!"

"If what I say be told in confidence?" she replied, as if questioning his advance.

"You may trust me with any secret; I am ready to serve you, if it be with my life!"

Clasping her arms round her child, again she wept in silence. The moment was propitious—the summer sun had just set beneath dark foliage in the west, its refulgent

curtains now fading into mellow tints; night was closing rapidly over the scene, the serene moon shone softly through the arbour into the little window at her bedside. Again she took him by the hand, invited him to sit down at her side, and, looking imploringly in his face, continued,—"If you are a friend, you can be a friend in confidence, in purpose. I am a slave! yes, a slave; there is much in the word, more than most men are disposed to analyse. It may seem simple to you, but follow it to its degraded depths—follow it to where it sows the seeds of sorrow, and there you will find it spreading poison and death, uprooting all that is good in nature. Worse than that, my child is a slave too. It is that which makes the wrong more cruel, that mantles the polished vice, that holds us in that fearful grasp by which we dare not seek our rights.

"My mother, ah! yes, my mother (Clotilda shakes her head in sorrow). How strange that, by her misfortune, all, all, is misfortune for ever! from one generation to another, sinking each life down, down, down, into misery and woe. How oft she clasped my hand and whispered in my ear: 'If we could but have our rights.' And she, my mother, (as by that sacred name I called her) was fair; fairer than those who held her for a hideous purpose, made her existence loathsome to herself, who knew the right but forced the wrong. She once had rights, but was stripped of them; and once in slavery who can ask that right be done?"

"What rights have you beyond these?" he interrupted, suddenly. "There is mystery in what you have said, in what I have seen; something I want to solve. The same ardent devotion, tenderness, affection,—the same touching chasteness, that characterises Franconia, assimuiates in you.

You are a slave, a menial—she is courted and caressed by persons of rank and station. Heavens! here is the curse, confounding the flesh and blood of those in high places, making slaves of their own kinsmen, crushing out the spirit of life, rearing up those broken flowers whose heads droop with shame. And you want your freedom?"

"For my child first, she replied, quickly: "I rest my hopes of her in the future."

Maxwell hesitated for a moment, as if contemplating some plan for her escape, ran his fingers through his hair again and again, then rested his forehead in his hand, as the perspiration stood in heavy drops upon it. "My child!" There was something inexpressibly touching in the words of a mother ready to sacrifice her own happiness for the freedom of her child. And yet an awful responsibility hung over him; should he attempt to gain their freedom, and fail in carrying out the project, notwithstanding he was in a free country, the act might cost him his life. But there was the mother, her pride beaming forth in every action, a wounded spirit stung with the knowledge of being a slave, the remorse of her suffering soul—the vicissitudes of that sin thus forced upon her. The temptation became irresistible.

"You are English!"—northerners and Englishmen know what liberty is.* Northerners could do great things for us, if they would but know us as we are, study our feelings, cast aside selfish motives, and sustain our rights!" Clotilda

* Negroes at the South have a very high opinion of Northern cleverness in devising means of procuring their liberty. The Author here uses the language employed by a slave girl who frequently implored aid to devise some plan by which she would be enabled to make her escape.

now commenced giving Maxwell a history of her mother,—which, however, we must reserve for another chapter. "And my mother gave me this!" she said, drawing from her pocket a paper written over in Greek characters, but so defaced as to be almost unintelligible. "Some day you will find a friend who will secure your freedom through that," she would say. "But freedom—that which is such a boon to us—is so much feared by others that you must mark that friend cautiously, know him well, and be sure he will not betray the liberty you attempt to gain." And she handed him the defaced paper, telling him to put it in his pocket.

"And where is your mother?"

"There would be a store of balm in that, if I did but know. Her beauty doomed her to a creature life, which, when she had worn out, she was sold, as I may be, God knows how soon. Though far away from me, she is my mother still, in all that recollection can make her; her countenance seems like a wreath decorating our past associations. Shrink not when I tell it, for few shrink at such things now,—I saw her chained; I didn't think much of it then, for I was too young. And she took me in her arms and kissed me, the tears rolled down her cheeks; and she said—'Clotilda, Clotilda, farewell! There is a world beyond this, a God who knows our hearts, who records our sorrows;' and her image impressed me with feelings I cannot banish. To look back upon it seems like a rough pilgrimage; and then when I think of seeing her again my mind gets lost in hopeless expectations"—

"You saw her chained?" interrupted Maxwell.

"Yes, even chained with strong irons. It need not sur-

prise you. Slavery is a crime; and they chain the innocent lest the wrong should break forth upon themselves." And she raised her hands to her face, shook her head, and laid Annette in the little bed at the foot of her own.

What is it that in chaining a woman, whether she be black as ebony or white as snow, misnames all the traits of of the southerner's character, which he would have the world think noble? It is fear! The monster which the southerner sees by day, tolerates in his silence, protects as part and parcel of a legal trade, only clothes him with the disgrace that menials who make themselves mere fiends are guilty of, Maxwell thought to himself.

"I will set you free, if it cost my life!" he exclaimed.

"Hush, hush!" rejoined Clotilda: "remember those wretches on the plantation. They, through their ignorance, have learned to wield the tyranny of petty power; they look upon us with suspicious eyes. They know we are negroes (white negroes, who are despicable in their eyes), and feel ing that we are more favoured, their envy is excited. They, with the hope of gaining favour, are first to disclose a secret. Save my child first, and then save me"—

"I will save you first; rest assured, I will save you;" he responded, shaking her hand, bidding her good night. On returning to the mansion he found Marston seated at the table in the drawing-room, in a meditative mood. "Good night, my friend!" he accosted him.

"Ah, good night!" was the sudden response.

"You seem cast down?"

"No!—all's not as it seems with a man in trouble. How misfortune quickens our sense of right! O! how it unfolds

political and moral wrongs! how it purges the understanding, and turns the good of our natures to thoughts of justice. But when the power to correct is beyond our reach we feel the wrong most painfully," Marston coldly replied.

"It never is too late to do good; my word for it, friend Marston, good is always worth its services. I am young and may serve you yet; rise above trouble, never let trifles trouble a man like you. The world seems wagging pleasantly for you; everybody on the plantation is happy; Lorenzo has gone into the world to distinguish himself; grief should never lay its scalpel in your feelings. Remember the motto—peace, pleasantry, and plenty; they are things which should always dispel the foreshadowing of unhappiness," says Maxwell, jocularly, taking a chair at Marston's request, and seating himself by the table.

Marston declares such consolation to be refreshing, but too easily conceived to effect his purpose. The ripest fruits of vice often produce the best moral reflections: he feels convinced of this truth; but here the consequences are entailed upon others. The degradation is sunk too deep for recovery by him,—his reflections are only a burden to him. The principle that moves him to atone is crushed by the very perplexity of the law that compels him to do wrong. "There's what goads me," he says: "it is the system, the forced condition making one man merchandise, and giving another power to continue him as such." He arises from the table, his face flushed with excitement, and in silence paces the room to and fro for several minutes. Every now and then he watches at the window,—looks out towards the river, and again at the pine-woods

forming a belt in the background, as if he expected some one from that direction. The serene scene without, calm and beautiful, contrasting with the perplexity that surrounded him within, brought the reality of the change which must soon take place in his affairs more vividly to his mind.

"Your feelings have been stimulated and modified by education; they are keenly sensitive to right,—to justice between man and man. Those are the beautiful results of early instruction. New England education! It founds a principle for doing good; it needs no contingencies to rouse it to action. You can view slavery with the unprejudiced eye of a philosopher. Listen to what I am about to say: but a few months have passed since I thought myself a man of affluence, and now nothing but the inroads of penury are upon me. The cholera (that scourge of a southern plantation) is again sweeping the district: I cannot expect to escape it, and I am in the hands of a greater scourge than the cholera,—a slow death-broker. He will take from you that which the cholera would not deign to touch: he has no more conscience than a cotton-press," says Marston, reclining back in his chair, and calling the negro waiter.

The word conscience fell upon Maxwell's ear with strange effect. He had esteemed Marston according to his habits (not a good test when society is so remiss of its duties): he could not reconcile the touch of conscience in such a person, nor could he realise the impulse through which some sudden event was working a moral regeneration in his mind. There was something he struggled to keep from notice. The season had been unpropitious, bad crops had resulted; the cholera made its appearance, swept off many of the best negroes, spread consternation, nearly suspended

discipline and labour. One by one his negroes fell victims to its ravages, until it became imperatively necessary to remove the remainder to the pine-woods.

Families might be seen here and there making their little preparations to leave for the hills: the direful scourge to them was an evil spirit, sent as a visitation upon their bad deeds. This they sincerely believe, coupling it with all the superstition their ignorance gives rise to. A few miles from the mansion, among the pines, rude camps are spread out, fires burn to absorb the malaria, to war against mosquitoes, to cook the evening meal; while, up lonely paths, ragged and forlorn-looking negroes are quietly wending their way to take possession. The stranger might view this forest bivouac as a picture of humble life pleasantly domiciled; but it is one of those unfortunate scenes, fruitful of evil, which beset the planter when he is least able to contend against them. Such events develope the sin of an unrighteous institution, bring its supporters to the portals of poverty, consign harmless hundreds to the slave-marts.

In this instance, however, we must give Marston credit for all that was good in his intentions, and separate him from the system. Repentance, however produced, is valuable for its example, and if too late for present utility, seldom fails to have an ultimate influence. Thus it was with Marston; and now that all these inevitable disasters were upon him, he resolved to be a father to Annette and Nicholas, —those unfortunates whom law and custom had hitherto compelled him to disown.

Drawing his chair close to Maxwell, he lighted a cigar, and resumed the disclosure his feelings had apparently in-

terrupted a few minutes before. "Now, my good friend, all these things are upon me; there is no escaping the issue. My people will soon be separated from me; my old, faithful servants, Bob and Harry, will regret me, and if they fall into the hands of a knave, will die thinking of the old plantation. As for Harry, I have made him a preacher,—his knowledge is wonderfully up on Scripture; he has demonstrated to me that niggers are more than mortal, or transitory things. My conscience was touched while listening to one of his sermons; and then, to think how I had leased him to preach upon a neighbouring plantation, just as a man would an ox to do a day's work! Planters paid me so much per sermon, as if the gospel were merchandise, and he a mere thing falsifying all my arguments against his knowledge of the Word of God. Well, it makes me feel as if I were half buried in my own degradation and blindness. And then, again, they are our property, and are bestowed upon us by a legal———"

"If that be wrong," interrupted Maxwell, "you have no excuse for continuing it."

"True! That's just what I was coming at. The evil in its broadest expanse is there. We look calmly on the external objects of the system without solving its internal grievances,—we build a right upon the ruins of ancient wrongs, and we swathe our thoughts with inconsistency that we may make the curse of a system invulnerable. It is not that we cannot do good under a bad system, but that we cannot ameliorate it, lest we weaken the foundation. And yet all this seems as nothing when I recall a sin of greater magnitude—a sin that is upon me—a hideous blot, goading my very soul, rising up against me like a mountain, over which

I can see no pass. Again the impelling force of conscience incites me to make a desperate effort; but conscience rebukes me for not preparing the way in time. I could translate my feelings further, but, in doing so, the remedy seems still further from me——"

"Is it ever too late to try a remedy—to make an effort to surmount great impediments—to render justice to those who have suffered from such acts?" inquired Maxwell, interrupting Marston as he proceeded.

"If I could do it without sacrificing my honour, without exposing myself to the vengeance of the law. We are great sticklers for constitutional law, while we care little for constitutional justice. There is Clotilda; you see her, but you don't know her history: if it were told it would resound through the broad expanse of our land. Yes, it would disclose a wrong, perpetrated under the smiles of liberty, against which the vengeance of high Heaven would be invoked. I know the secret, and yet I dare not disclose it; the curse handed down from her forefathers has been perpetuated by me. She seems happy, and yet she is unhappy; the secret recesses of her soul are poisoned. And what more natural? for, by some unlucky incident, she has got an inkling of the foul means by which she was made a slave. To him who knows the right, the wrong is most painful; but I bought her of him whose trade it was to sell such flesh and blood! And yet that does not relieve me from the curse: there's the stain; it hangs upon me, it involves my inclinations, it gloats over my downfall——"

"You bought her!" again interrupts Maxwell.

"True," rejoins the other, quickly, "'tis a trade well protected by our democracy. Once bought, we cannot

relieve ourselves by giving them rights in conflict with the claims of creditors. Our will may be good, but the will without the means falls hopeless. My heart breaks under the knowledge that those children are mine. It is a sad revelation to make,—sad in the eyes of heaven and earth. My participation in wrong has proved sorrow to them: how can I look to the pains and struggles they must endure in life, when stung with the knowledge that I am the cause of it? I shall wither under the torture of my own conscience. And there is even an interest about them that makes my feelings bound joyfully when I recur them. Can it be aught but the fruit of natural affection? I think not; and yet I am compelled to disown them, and even to smother with falsehood the rancour that might find a place in Franconia's bosom. Clotilda loves Annette with a mother's fondness; but with all her fondness for her child she dare not love me, nor I the child."

Maxwell suggests that his not having bought the child would certainly give him the right to control his own flesh and blood: but he knows little of slave law, and less of its customs. He, however, was anxious to draw from Marston full particulars of the secret that would disclose Clotilda's history, over which the partial exposition had thrown the charm of mystery. Several times he was on the eve of proffering his services; to relieve the burden working upon Marston's mind; but his sympathies were enlisted toward the two unfortunate women, for whom he was ready to render good service, to relieve them and their children. Again, he remembered how singularly sensitive Southerners were on matters concerning the peculiar institution, especially when approached by persons from abroad. Perhaps

it was a plot laid by Marston to ascertain his feelings on the subject, or, under that peculiar jealousy of Southerners who live in this manner, he might have discovered his interview with Clotilda, and, in forming a plan to thwart his project, adopted this singular course for disarming apprehensions.

At this stage of the proceedings a whispering noise was heard, as if coming from another part of the room. They stopped at the moment, looked round with surprise, but not seeing anything, resumed the conversation.

"Of whom did you purchase?" inquired Maxwell, anxiously.

"One Silenus; a trader who trades in this quality of property only, and has become rich by the traffic. He is associated with Anthony Romescos, once a desperado on the Texan frontier. These two coveys would sell their messmates without a scruple, and think it no harm so long as they turned a dime. They know every justice of the peace from Texas to Fort M'Henry. Romescos is turned the desperado again, shoots, kills, and otherwise commits fell deeds upon his neighbour's negroes; he even threatens them with death when they approach him for reparation. He snaps his fingers at law, lawyers, and judges: slave law is moonshine to those who have no rights in common law——"

"And he escapes? Then you institute laws, and substitute custom to make them null. It is a poor apology for a namesake. But do you assert that in the freest and happiest country—a country that boasts the observance of its statute laws—a man is privileged to shoot, maim, and torture a fellow-being, and that public opinion fails to bring him to justice?" ejaculated Maxwell.

"Yes," returns Marston, seriously; "it is no less shameful than true. Three of my negroes has he killed very good-naturedly, and yet I have no proof to convict him Even were I to seek redress, it would be against that prejudice which makes the rights of the enslaved unpopular."

The trouble exists in making the man merchandise, reducing him to an abject being, without the protection of common law. Presently the tears began to flow down Marston's cheeks, as he unbuttoned his shirt-collar with an air of restlessness, approached a desk that stood in one corner of the room, and drew from it a somewhat defaced bill of sale. There was something connected with that bit of paper, which, apart from anything else, seemed to harass him most. "But a minute before you entered I looked upon that paper," he spoke, throwing it upon the table, "and thought how much trouble it had brought me, how through it I had left a curse upon innocent life. I paid fifteen hundred dollars for the souls and bodies of those two women, creatures of sense, delicacy, and tenderness. But I am not a bad man, after all. No, there are worse men than me in the world."

"Gather, gather, ye incubus of misfortune, bearing to me the light of heaven, with which to see my sins. May it come to turn my heart in the right way, to seek its retribution on the wrong!" Thus concluding, Marston covers his face in his hands, and for several minutes weeps like a child. Again rising from his seat, he throws the paper on a table near an open window, and himself upon a couch near by.

Maxwell attempts to quiet him by drawing his attention

from the subject. There is little use, however,—it is a terrible conflict,—the conflict of conscience awakening to a sense of its errors; the fate of regrets when it is too late to make amends.

While this was going on, a brawny hand reached into the window, and quickly withdrew the paper from the table. Neither observed it.

And at the moment, Marston ejaculated, "I will! I will! let it cost what it may. I will do justice to Clotilda and her child,—to Ellen and her child; I will free them, send them into a free country to be educated." In his excitement he forgot the bill of sale.

"Like enough you will!" responds a gruff voice; and a loud rap at the hall-door followed. Dandy was summoned, opened the door, bowed Romescos into the room. He pretends to be under the influence of liquor, which he hopes will excuse his extraordinary familiarity at such a late hour. Touching the hilt of his knife, he swaggers into the presence of Marston, looks at him fixedly, impertinently demands something to drink. He cares not what it be, waits for no ceremony, tips the decanter, gulps his glass, and deliberately takes a seat.

The reader will perhaps detect the object of his presence; but, beyond that, there is something deep and desperate in the appearance of the man, rendering his familiarity exceedingly disagreeable. That he should present himself at such an untimely hour was strange beyond Marston's comprehension. It was, indeed, most inopportune; but knowing him, he feared him. He could not treat him with indifference,—there was his connection with Graspum, his power over the poor servile whites; he must be courteous—

so, summoning his suavity, he orders Dandy to wait upon him.

Romescos amuses himself with sundry rude expressions about the etiquette of gentlemen,—their rights and associations,—the glorious freedom of a glorious land. Not heeding Dandy's attention, he fills another glass copiously, twirls it upon the table, eyes Marston, and then Maxwell, playfully—drinks his beverage with the air of one quite at home.

"Marston, old feller," he says, winking at Maxwell, "things don't jibe so straight as they use 't—do they? I wants a stave a' conversation on matters a' business with ye to-morrow. It's a smart little property arrangement; but I ain't in the right fix just now; I can't make the marks straight so we can understand two and two. Ye take, don't ye? Somethin' touching a genteel business with your fast young nephew, Lorenzo. Caution to the wise." Romescos, making several vain attempts, rises, laughing with a half-independent air, puts his slouch hat on his head, staggers to the door, makes passes at Dandy, who waits his egress, and bidding them good night, disappears.

CHAPTER IX.

WHO IS SAFE AGAINST THE POWER?

THE cholera raging on Marston's plantation, had excited Graspum's fears. His pecuniary interests were above every other consideration—he knew no higher object than the accumulation of wealth; and to ascertain the precise nature and extent of the malady he had sent Romescos to reconnoitre.

Returning to the long-room at Graspum's slave-pen, we must introduce the reader to scenes which take place on the night following that upon which Romescos secured the bill of sale at Marston's mansion.

Around the table we have before described sit Graspum and some dozen of his clan. Conspicuous among them is Dan Bengal, and Nath Nimrod, whom we described as running into the room unceremoniously, holding by the hair the head of a negro, and exulting over it as a prize of much value. They are relating their adventures, speculating over the prospects of trade, comparing notes on the result of making free trash human property worth something! They all manifest the happiest of feelings, have a language of their own, converse freely; at times sprinkle their conversation with pointed oaths. They are conversant with the business affairs of every planter in the State, know his liabilities, the condition of his negroes, his hard cases, his bad cases, his runaways, and his prime property. Their

dilations on the development of wenches, shades of colour, qualities of stock suited to the various markets—from Richmond to New Orleans—disclose a singular foresight into the article of poor human nature.

"There's nothing like pushing our kind of business, specially whin ye gits it where ye can push profitably," speaks Bengal, his fiery red eyes glaring over the table as he droops his head sluggishly, and, sipping his whiskey, lets it drip over his beard upon his bosom; "if 't warn't for Anthony's cunnin' we'd have a pested deal of crooked law to stumble through afore we'd get them rich uns upset."

My reader must know that southern law and justice for the poor succumb to popular feeling in all slave atmospheres; and happy is the fellow who can work his way through slavedom without being dependent upon one, or brought under the influence of the other.

Graspum, in reply to Bengal, feels that gentlemen in the "nigger business" should respect themselves. He well knows there exists not the best feeling in the world between them and the more exclusive aristocracy, whose feelings must inevitably be modified to suit the democratic spirit of the age. He himself enjoys that most refined society, which he asserts to be strong proof of the manner in which democracy is working its way to distinction. Our business, he says, hath so many avenues that it has become positively necessary that some of them should be guarded by men of honour, dignity, and irreproachable conduct. Now, he has sent Anthony Romescos to do some watching on the sly, at Marston's plantation; but there is nothing dishonourable in that, inasmuch as the victim is safe in his claws. Contented with these considerations, Graspum

puffs his cigar very composedly. From slave nature, slave-seeking adventures, and the intricacies of the human-property-market, they turn to the discussion of state rights, of freedom in its broadest and most practical sense. And, upon the principle of the greatest despot being foremost to discuss what really constitutes freedom, which, however, he always argues in an abstract sense, Nimrod was loudest and most lavish in his praises of a protective government—a government that would grant great good justice to the white man only. It matters little to Nimrod which is the greater nigger; he believes in the straight principles of right in the white man. It is not so much how justice is carried out when menial beings form a glorious merchandise; but it is the true essence of liberty, giving men power to keep society all straight, to practice liberty very liberally. "Ye see, now, Graspum," he quaintly remarks, as he takes up the candle to light his cigar, "whatever ye do is right, so long as the law gives a feller a right to do it. 'Tisn't a bit a' use to think how a man can be too nice in his feelings when a hundred or two's to be made on nigger property what's delicate, t'aint! A feller feels sore once in a while, a' cos his conscience is a little touchy now and then; but it won't do to give way to it—conscience don't bring cash. When ye launches out in the nigger-trading business ye must feel vengeance agin the brutes, and think how it's *only* trade; how it's perfectly legal—and how it's encouraged by the Governor's proclamations. Human natur's human natur'; and when ye can turn a penny at it, sink all the in'ard inclinations. Just let the shiners slide in, it don't matter a tenpence where ye got 'em. Trade's everything! you might as well talk about patriotism among crowned heads,—

about the chivalry of commerce: cash makes consequence, and them's what makes gentlemen, south."

They welcome the spirits, although it has already made them soulless. The negro listens to a dialogue of singular import to himself; his eyes glistened with interest, as one by one they sported over the ignorance enforced upon the weak. One by one they threw their slouch hats upon the floor, drew closer in conclave, forming a grotesque picture of fiendish faces. "Now, gentlemen," Graspum deigns to say, after a moment's pause, motioning to the decanter, "pass it along round when ye gets a turn about." He fills his glass and drinks, as if drink were a necessary accompaniment of the project before them. "This case of Marston's is a regular plumper; there's a spec to be made in that stock of stuff; and them bright bits of his own—they look like him—'ll make right smart fancy. Ther' developing just in the right sort of way to be valuable for market."

"There's movin' a' the shrewdest kind to be done there, Graspum! Where's the dockerment what 'll make 'um property, eh?" interrupted Nimrod, twisting the hair with which his face is covered into fantastic points.

"Oh, my good fellows, public opinion's the dockerment; with the bright side of public opinion! Public opinion whispers about Clotilda: it says she looks so much like that niece of Marston's, that you couldn't tell them apart. And they are like two pins, gentlemen; but then one's property and t'other's anything but property. One will bring something substantial in the market: I wouldn't say much about the other. But there's pride in the whole

family, and where it's got into the niggers it's worth a few extra dollars. The Marstons and Roveros don't think much of we dealers when they don't want our money; but when they do we are cousins of the right stripe. However, these ere little aristocratic notions don't mount to much; they are bin generous blood-mixers, and now they may wince over it——"

Graspum is interrupted again. Bengal has been analysing his logic, and rises to dispute the logic of his arguments. He is ready to stake his political faith, and all his common sense—of which he never fails to boast—that mixing the blood of the two races destroys the purity of the nigger, spiles the gauge of the market, detracts from real plantation property, and will just upset the growin' of young niggers. He is sure he knows just as much about the thing as anybody else, has never missed his guess, although folks say he aint no way clever at selection; and, rubbing his eyes after adjusting the long black hair that hangs down over his shoulders, he folds his arms with an independent air, and waits the rejoinder.

The dingy room breathes thick of deleterious fumes; a gloom hangs over their meditationss, deep and treacherous: it excites fear, not of the men, but of the horrors of their trade. A dim light hangs suspended from the ceiling: even the sickly shade contrasts strangely with their black purpose.

"Variety of shade, my dear Bengal, is none of our business. If you make a division you destroy the property and the principle. We don't represent the South: if we did, my stars! how the abolitionists would start up,—eh! Now, there's a right smart chance of big aristocrat folks in the district, and they think something of their niggers,

and some are fools enough to think niggers have souls just as white as we. That's where the thing don't strike our morals alike. It's all right to let such folks represent us—that it is! It tells down north."

"I goes in for that! It puts a polished face on the brown side of things. That's the way I puts it on when I gets among the big 'uns on 'Change. I talks to one, shakes hands with another, touches my hat to the president of the bank; and then them what don't know thinks how I do a little in the taking a corner of notes line!" "In the same sly way that directors of banks do," interrupts a voice, sullenly and slow. It was long Joe Morphet, the constable's sponge, who did a little in the line of nigger trailing, and now and then acted as a contingent of Graspum. Joe had, silently and with great attention, listened to their consultations, expecting to get a hook on at some point where his services would play at a profit; but it all seemed beyond his comprehension—amounted to nothing.

"There's something in Joe, gentlemen! But our genteelest folks don't alway do the genteelest things, arter all. Right—right! Joe's right!" Graspum has suddenly comprehended Joe's logic, and brightens up with the possession of a new idea, that at first was inclined to get crosswise in his mind, which he has drilled in the minor details of human nature rather than the political dignity of the state. Joe's ideas are ranging over the necessity of keeping up a good outside for the state; Graspum thinks only of keeping up the dignity of himself. "Well, give in, fellers; Joe's right clever. He's got head enough to get into Congress, and if polished up wouldn't make the worst feller that ever was sent: he wouldn't, to my certain knowledge. Joe's

clever! What great men do with impunity little men have no scruples in following; what the state tolerates, knaves may play upon to their own advantage. To keep up the dignity of a slave state, slave dealers must keep up dignity among themselves: the one cannot live without the other. They must affect, and the state must put on, the dignity; and northerners what aint gentlemen must be taught to know that they aint gentlemen." This is the conclusion to which Graspum has arrived on the maturest reflection of a few minutes: it conforms with the opinion and dignity of slaveocracy—must be right, else the glorious Union, with the free-thinking north unfortunately attached, could never be preserved. It's the nut of a glorious compact which the south only must crack, and will crack. Graspum apologised for the thing having escaped his memory so long. He remembered that southerners left no stone unturned that could serve the policy of concentrating slave power; and he remembered that it was equally necessary to keep an eye to the feeling abroad. There were in America none but southern nobles,—no affable gentlemen who could do the grace of polite circles except themselves,—none who, through their bland manners, could do more to repel the *awful* descriptions given of southern society, nor who could not make strangers believe slaves were happy mortals, happily created to live in all the happiness of slave life. "There's nothing like putting our learned folks ahead—they're polished down for the purpose, you see—and letting them represent us when abroad; they puts a different sort of shine on things what our institution makes profitable. They don't always set good examples at home, but we can't control their tastes on small matters of that kind: and then,

what a valuable offset it is, just to have the power of doing the free and easy gentleman, to be the brilliant companion, to put on the smooth when you go among nobility what don't understand the thing!" Graspum adds, with a cunning wink.

"Pooh! pooh! such talk don't jingle. You can't separate our aristocracy from mistress-keeping. It's a matter of romance with them,—a matter of romance, gentlemen, that's all. The south couldn't live without romance, she couldn't!" adds Nimrod, stretching back in his chair.

"And where did you get that broad idea from, *Jakey?* I kind 'a likes that sort of philosophy," adds another.

"Philosophy! I reckon how there is deep and strong philosophy in that ar; but ye can't calc'late much on't when ye haint talents to bring it out. That point where the soul comes in is a puzzler on Yankees; but it takes our editors and parsons to put the arguments where the Yankees can't demolish them. Read the Richmond ———, my grandmother of the day, if ye want to see the philosophy of niggers, and their souls. That editor is a philosopher; the world's got to learn his philosophy. Just take that preacher from New Jersey, what preaches in All Saints; if he don't prove niggers aint no souls I'm a Dutchman, and dead at that! He gives 'em broadside logic, gentlemen; and if he hadn't been raised north he wouldn't bin so up on niggers when he cum south," was the quick rejoinder of our knowing expounder, who, looking Graspum in the face, demanded to know if he was not correct. Graspum thinks it better to waste no more time in words, but to get at the particular piece of business for which they have been called together. He is a man of money,—a man of trade, ever

willing to admit the philosophy of the man-market, but don't see the difference of honour between the aristocrat who sells his *bits* in the market, and the honourable dealer who gets but a commission for selling them. And there's something about the parson who, forgetting the sanctity of his calling, sanctifies everything pertaining to slavery. Conscience, he admits, is a wonderful thing fixed somewhere about the heart, and, in spite of all he can do, will trouble it once in a while. Marston—poor Marston!—he declares to be foolishly troubled with it, and it makes him commit grievous errors. And then, there's no understandin' it, because Marston has a funny way of keeping it under such a knotty-looking exterior. Graspum declares he had nothing to do with the breaking out of the cholera, is very sorry for it,—only wants his own, just like any other honest man. He kind 'a likes Marston, admits he is a sort of good fellow in his way; mighty careless though, wouldn't cheat anybody if he knew it, and never gave half a minute's thinking about how uncertain the world was. But the cholera—a dire disease among niggers—has broke out in all the fury of its ravages; and it makes him think of his sick niggers and paying his debts. "You see, gentlemen—we are all gentlemen here," Graspum continues,—"a man must pay the penalty of his folly once in a while. It's the fate of great men as well as smaller ones; all are liable to it. That isn't the thing, though; it don't do to be chicken-hearted afore niggers, nor when yer dealing in niggers, nor in any kind a' business what ye want to make coin at. Marston 'll stick on that point, he will; see if he don't. His feelins are troubling him: he knows I've got the

assignment; and if he don't put them ar' white 'uns of his in the schedule, I'll snap him up for fraud,—I will——"

The conversation is here interrupted by a loud rap at the door, which is opened by the negro, who stands with his finger on the latch. Romescos, in his slovenly garb, presents himself with an air of self-assurance that marks the result of his enterprise. He is a prominent feature in all Graspum's great operations; he is desperate in serving his interests. Drawing a handkerchief from his pocket (it is printed with the stars and stripes of freedom), he calls it a New England rag, disdainfully denounces that area of unbelievers in slaveocracy, wipes his blistered face with it, advances to the table (every eye intently watching him), and pauses for breath.

"What success, Anthony? Tell us quickly," Graspum demands, extending his hand nervously. "Anthony never fails! It's a fool who fails in our business," was the reply, delivered with great unconcern, and responded to with unanimous applause. A warrior returned from victory was Anthony,—a victory of villainy recorded in heaven, where the rewards will, at some day, be measured out with a just but awful retribution.

The bosom of his shirt lays broadly open: one by one they shake his hand, as he hastily unties the chequered cloth about his neck, pours out his drink of whiskey, seats himself in a chair, and deliberately places his feet upon the table. "Ther's nothin' like making a triangle of oneself when ye wants to feel so ye can blow comfortable," he says. "I done nothin' shorter than put all straight at Marston's last night. It was science, ye see, gents; and I done it up strictly according to science. A feller what aint cunnin',

and don't know the nice work a' the law, can't do nothin' in the way a' science. It's just as you said (addressing his remarks to Graspum)—Marston's slackin' out his conscience because he sees how things are goin' down hill with him. If that old hoss cholera don't clar off the nigger property, I'm no prophet. It'll carry 'em into glory; and glory, I reckon, isn't what you calls good pay, eh, Graspum? I overheard his intentions: he sees the black page before him; it troubles the chicken part of his heart. Feels mighty meek and gentle all at once; and, it's no lie, he begins to see sin in what he has done; and to make repentance good he's goin' to shove off that nabob stock of his, so the creditors can't lay paws upon it. Ye got to spring; Marston 'll get ahead of ye if he don't, old feller. This child 'll show him how he can't cum some 'a them things while Squire Hobble and I'm on hand." Thus quaintly he speaks, pulling the bill of sale from a side-pocket, throwing it upon the table with an air of satisfaction amounting to exultation. "Take that ar; put it where ye can put yer finger on't when the 'mergency comes." And he smiles to see how gratefully and anxiously Graspum receives it, reviews it, re-reviews it,—how it excites the joy of his nature. He has no soul beyond the love of gold, and the system of his bloody trade. It was that fatal instrument, great in the atmosphere of ungrateful law, bending some of nature's noblest beneath its seal of crimes. "It's from Silenus to Marston; rather old, but just the thing! Ah, you're a valuable fellow, Anthony." Mr. Graspum manifests his approbation by certain smiles, grimaces, and shakes of the hand, while word by word he reads it, as if eagerly relishing its worth. "It's a little thing for a great purpose; it'll

tell a tale in its time;" and he puts the precious scrip safely in his pocket, and rubbing his hands together, declares "*that* deserves a bumper!" They fill up at Graspum's request, drink with social cheers, followed by a song from Nimrod, who pitches his tune to the words, "Come, landlord, fill the flowing bowl."

Nimrod finishes his song: Romescos takes the floor to tell a story about the old judge what hung the nigger a'cos he didn't want to spend his patience listening to the testimony, and adjourned the court to go and take a drink at Sal Stiles's grocery. His description of the court, its high jurisdiction, the dignity of the squire what sits as judge, how he drinks the three jurymen (freeholders) what are going to try a nigger, how they goes out and takes three drinks when the case gets about half way through, how the nigger winks and blinks when he sees the jury drunk, and hears the judge say there's only two things he likes to hang,—niggers and schoolmasters. But as it's no harm to kill schoolmasters (speaking in a southern sense), so Romescos thinks the squire who got the jury inebriated afore he sent the "nigger" to be hung doesn't mean the least harm when he evinces an abhorrence to the whole clan of schoolmaster trash. He turns to the old story of doing everything by system; ends by describing his method of drinking a whole jury. He has surprised Marston, got him on the hip, where he can feather him or sciver him, and where things must be done sly. Public opinion, he whispers, may set folks moving, and then they'll all be down upon him like hawks after chickens. In his mind, the *feller* what pulls first comes off first best—if the law hounds are not too soon let loose! If they are, there will be a long drag,

a small cage for the flock, and very few birds with feathers on. Romescos cares for nobody but the judge: he tells us how the judge and he are right good cronies, and how it's telling a good many dollars at the end of the year to keep on the best of terms with him, always taking him to drink when they meet. The judge is a wonderfully clever fellow, in Romescos' opinion; ranks among first-class drinkers; can do most anything, from hanging a nigger to clearing the fellow that killed the schoolmaster, and said he'd clear a dozen in two two's, if they'd kill off ever so many of the rubbish. It is well to make his favour a point of interest. The company are become tired of this sort of cantation; they have heard enough of high functionaries, know quite enough of judges:—such things are in their line of business. Romescos must needs turn the conversation. "Well, taking it how I can entertain ye to most anything, I'll give ye a story on the secrets of how I used to run off Ingin remnants of the old tribes. 'Taint but a few years ago, ye know, when ther was a lot of Ingin and white, mixed stuff (some called it beautiful) down in Beaufort district. It was temptin' though, I reckon, and made a feller feel just as if he was runnin' it off to sell, every time it come in his way. Ye see, most on't was gal property, and that kind, alas, keeps the whole district in a hubbub; everybody's offended, and there's so much delicacy about the ladies what come in contact with it. Yes, gentlemen! the ladies—I means the aristocracy's ladies—hate these copper-coloured Ingins as they would female devils. It didn't do to offend the delicacy of our ladies, ye see; so something must be done, but it was all for charity's sake. Squire Hornblower and me fixes a plan a'tween us: it was just the plan to do good for the

town (we must always be kind, ye know, and try to do good), and save the dear good ladies a great deal of unnecessary pain.

"Now, the squire had law larnin', and I had cunnin'; and both put together made the thing work to a point. The scheme worked so nicely that we put twelve out of fifteen of 'em right into pocket-money in less than three years—"

"Hold a second, Romescos; how did you play the game so adroitly, when they were all members of families living in the town? You're a remarkable fellow," Graspum interposes, stretching his arms, and twisting his sturdy figure over the side of his chair.

"That's what I was coming at. Ye see, whenever ye makes white trash what ain't slaved a nuisance, you makes it mightily unpopular; and when folks is unpopular the nuisance is easily removed, especially when ye can get pay for removing it. The law will be as tame as a mouse—nobody 'll say nothin'? Ingin and white rubbish is just alike—one's worth as little as t'other. Both's only fit to sell, sir!—worthless for any other purpose. Ye see, gentlemen, I'm something of a philosopher, and has strong faith in the doctrine of our popular governor, who believes it better to sell all poor whites into slavery. 'Tain't a free country where ye don't have the right to sell folks what don't provide for number one. I likes to hear our big folks talk so (Anthony's face brightens), 'cause it gives a feller a chance for a free speculation in them lank, lean rascals; and, too, it would stop their rifle-shooting and corn-stealing—"

"You never try your hand at such hits—do you, Nathe?" Bengal interrupts, his fore-finger poised on his nose.

"Now, Dan," Anthony quaintly replies, "none a' yer pointed insinuations. 'Twouldn't be much harm if the varmin would only keep its mouth shut along the road. But when the critturs ar' got schoolmaster *gumption* it's mighty apt to get a feller into a tarnation snarl. Schoolmaster *gumption* makes b——d bad niggers; and there's why I say it's best to hang schoolmasters. It's dangerous, 'cos it larns the critturs to writin' a scrawl now and then; and, unless ye knows just how much talent he's got, and can whitewash him yaller, it's plaguy ticklish. When the brutes have larnin', and can write a little, they won't stay sold when ye sell 'em—that is, I mean, white riff-raff stuff; they ain't a bit like niggers and Ingins. And there's just as much difference a'tween the human natur of a white nigger and a poverty-bloated white as there is a'twixt philosophy and water-melons."

"You're drawing a long bow, Anthony," interrupts Graspum, with a suggestion that it were better to come to the point; and concludes by saying: "We don't care sevenpence about the worthless whites all over the State. They can't read nor write (except a few on 'em), and everybody knows it wouldn't do to give them learning—that wouldn't do! We want the way you cleared that nuisance out of Beaufort district so quick—that's what we want to hear."

"Well, ye'h sees, it took some keen play, some sly play, some dignity, and some talent; but the best thing of the whole was the squire's honour. He and me, ye see, joined partners—that is, he gets places for 'em away out a'

town (you understand), places where I keeps a couple of the very best nags that ever stepped turf. And then he puts on the soft sauder, an' is so friendly to the critturs——gets 'em to come out with him to where he will make 'um nice house servants, and such things. He is good at planin', as all justices is, and would time it to arrive at midnight. I, havin' got a start, has all ready to meet him; so when he gives me the papers, I makes a bolt at full speed, and has 'um nowhere afore they knows it. And then, when they sees who it is, it don't do to make a fuss about it—don't! And then, they're so handsome, it ain't no trouble finding a market for 'em down Memphis way. It only takes forty-eight hours—the way things is done up by steam—from the time I clears the *line* until Timothy Portman signs the bond—that's five per cent. for him—and Ned Sturm does the swearin', and they're sold for a slap-up price—sent to where there's no muttering about it. That's one way we does it; and then, there's another. But, all in all, there's a right smart lot of other ways that will work their way into a talented mind. And when a feller gets the hang on it, and knows lawyer gumption, he can do it up smooth. You must strap 'em down, chain 'em, look vengeance at 'em; and now and then, when the varmin will squeal, spite of all the thrashin' ye can give 'em, box 'em up like rats, and put yer horses like Jehu until ye cl'ar the State. The more ye scars 'em the better—make 'em as whist as mice, and ye can run 'em through the rail-road, and sell 'um just as easy.

"There was another way I used to do the thing—it was a sort of an honourable way; but it used to take the talents of a senator to do it up square, so the dignity didn't suffer.

Then the gals got shy of squire, 'cos them he got places for never cum back; and I know'd how 'twas best to leave two or three for a nest-egg. It was the way to do, in case some *green* should raise a fuss. But connected with these Ingin gals was one of the likleest yaller fellers that ever shined on a stand. Thar' was about twelve hundred dollars in him, I saw it just as straight, and felt it just as safe in my pocket; and then it made a feller's eyes glisten afore it was got out of him. I tell you what, boys, it's rather hard when ye comes to think on't." Anthony pauses for a moment, sharpens his eloquence with another drop of whiskey, and resumes his discourse. "The feller shined all outside, but he hadn't head talents (though he was as cunnin' as a fox), and every time the squire tried an experiment to get him out a' town, the nigger would dodge like a wounded raccoon. 'Twarn't a bit of use for the squire—so he just gin it up. Then I trys a hand, ye see, comes the soft soap over him, in a Sam Slick kind of a way. I'se a private gentleman, and gets the fellers round to call me a sort of an aristocrat. Doing this 'ere makes me a nabob in the town—another time I'm from New York, and has monstrous letters of introduction to the squire. Then I goes among the niggers and comes it over their stupid; tells 'em how I'm an abolitionist in a kind of secret way—gets their confidence. And then I larns a right smart deal of sayings from the Bible (a nigger's curious on Christianity, ye see), and it makes him think ye belong to that school, sartin! All the deviltry in his black natur' 'll cum out then; and he'll do just what ye tells him. So, ye see, I just draws the pious over him, and then—like all niggers—I gets

him to jine in what he calculates to be a nice little bit of roguery—running off."

Graspum becomes interested in the fine qualities of the prospective property, and must needs ask if he is *bright* and trim.

"Bright! I reckon he warn't nothin' else in a money sense—brighter nor most niggers, but mighty Inginy. Had the fierce of one and the cunnin' of t'other. Tom Pridgeon and me has an understandin' about the thing; and Tom's such a ripper for tradin' in nigger property—he is about the only devil niggers can imagine; and they delight to play tricks on Tom. Well, the nigger and me's good friends, right to the point; a good trick is to be played off on Tom, who buys the nigger in confidence; the nigger is to run off when he gets to Savannah, and Tom is to be indicted for running off 'free niggers.' I'se a great Christian, and joins heart and hand with the darkey; we takes our walks together, reads together, prays together. And then 'tain't long afore I becomes just the best white man in his estimation. Knowing when Tom makes up his gang, I proposes a walk in the grove to the nigger. 'Thank ye, sir,' says he, in an Ingin kind of way, and out we goes, sits down, talks pious, sings hymns, and waits to see the rascally nigger-trader come along. Presently Tom makes his appearance, with a right smart lot of extra prime property. The nigger and me marches down the road just like master and servant, and stops just when we meets Tom. You'd laughed to see Tom and me do the stranger. 'Well, mister,' says I, 'how's trade in your line?—there's mighty good prices for cotton just now; an' I 'spose 't keeps the market stiff up in your line!'

'Well, no,' says Tom: 'a feller can turn a good penny

in the way a' fancy articles, just now; but 'tain't the time for prime plantation-stock. Planters are all buying, and breeders down Virginia way won't give a feller a chance to make a shaving. It drives a feller hard up, ye see, and forces more business in running the free 'uns.'

'Why, stranger! what on 'arth do you mean by that 'ar; —wouldn't ye get straightened if you'd git catched at that business?'

'Oh, nothing, nothing! I forgot what I was saying,' says Tom, just as if he was scared at what he had let slip.

'I say, trader, ye got the brightest assortment of property thar' I seen for many a day: you don't call them gals slaves, do you? Down where I cum from, our folks wouldn't know 'em from white folks.' I tell you, boys, he had some bits that would a' made yer heart cum straight up.

'But I say, mister, I kind 'a like yer horse property—somehow he's full blood,' says I.

'Yes,' says Tom; 'he's one a' the best critturs to drive niggers with that ye ever did see; and he's beat the best horse on the Columbia course, twice.'

'Well, now; seein' how I likes the animal, about how much do ye'h set him at?' says I.

'Well! can't part with the nag nohow; seems as if he knowed a nigger, and understands the business right up.'

'But, you see, I'se got a bit of nigger property here what ye'h don't pick up every day for the Memphis trade,' says I, looking at the feller, who played his part right up to the hilt.

'Well, I don't mind strikin' a trade,' says Tom: 'but you see my nag's worth a little risin' a thousand dollars.'

'I don't doubt that, stranger,' says I: 'but ye'h sees this 'ar piece of property a' mine is worth more 'an twelve hundred. You don't come across such a looking chap every day. There's a spec. in him, in any market down south,' says I; and I puts my hands on the nigger and makes him show out, just as if Tom and me was striking for a trade. So Tom examines him, as if he was green in nigger business, and he and me strangers just come from t'other side of moon shadows.

'Well, now,' says Tom, 'it's mighty likely property, and seeing it's you, jist name a trade.'

'Put down the nag and two hundred dollars, and I'll sign the bill of sale, for a swap.' And Tom plants down the dimes, and takes the nigger. When Tom gets him to Savannah, he plunks him into jail, and keeps him locked up in a cell until he is ready to start south. I promises the nigger half of the spiles; but I slips an X* into his hand, and promises him the rest when he gets back—*when he does!* And ye see how Tom just tryced him up to the cross and put thirty-nine to his bare skin when he talked about being free, in Savannah; and gagged him when he got his Ingin up. Warn't that doing the thing up slick, fellers?" exclaimed Romescos, chuckling over the sport.

"It warn't nothing else. That's what I calls catching a nigger in his own trap," said one. "That's sarvin' him right; I go for sellin' all niggers and Ingins," said another.

* Ten dollars.

"Free niggers have no souls, and are impediments to personal rights in a free country," said a third.

"Ye'h see, there's such an infernal lot of loose corners about our business, that it takes a feller what has got a big head to do all the things smooth, in a legal way; and it's so profitable all round that it kind 'a tempts a feller, once in a while, to do things he don't feel just right in; but then a glass of old monongahela brings ye'h all straight in yer feelins again, a'ter a few minutes," said Romescos.

"It's an amusing business; a man's got to have nerve and maxim, if he wants to make a fortune at it. But—now, gentlemen, we'll take another round," said Graspum, stopping short. "Anthony, tell us how you work it when you want to run a free nigger down Maryland way."

"There ain't no trouble about that," replied Romescos, quickly. "You see," he continued, squinting his eye, and holding his glass between his face and the light. "Shut out all hope first, and then prime legal gentlemen along the road, and yer sartin to make safe business. I has chaps what keeps their eye on all the *free bits*, and makes good fellers with 'em; niggers think they'r the right stripe friends; and then they gives 'em jobs once in a while, and tobacco, and whiskey. So when I gets all fixed for a *run*, some on 'm gets the nigger into a sly spot, and then we pounces upon him like a hawk on a chicken—gags him, and screws him up in the chains, head and feet,—boxes him up, too, and drives him like lightning until I meets Tilman at the cross-roads; and then I just has a document * all ready, which I gives to *Till.*, and he puts his nags in—a pair what can take the road from anything about—and the way he

* A forged bill of sale.

drives, just to make the nigger forget where he's going, and think he's riding in a balloon on his way to glory. Just afore Till gets to the boat, ye see, he takes the head-chains off—so the delicate-hearted passengers won't let their feelins get kind-a out a' sorts. Once in a while the nigger makes a blubber about being free, to the captain,—and if he's fool enough t' take any notice on't then there's a fuss; but that's just the easiest thing to get over, if ye only know the squire, and how to manage him. You must know the pintes of the law, and ye must do the clean thing in the 'tin' way with the squire; and then ye can cut 'em right off by makin' t'other pintes make 'em mean nothing. Once in a while t'll do to make the nigger a criminal, and then there's no trouble in't, 'cos ye can al'as git the swearin' done cheap. Old Captain Smith used to get himself into a scrape a heap a' times by listenin' to free nigger stories, till he gets sick and would kick every nigger what came to him about being free. He takes the law in his hands with a nigger a' mine once, and hands him over to a city policeman as soon as we lands. He didn't understand the thing, ye see, and I jist puts an X * into the *polc's* hand, what he takes the hint at. 'Now, ye'll take good care on the feller,'' says I, giving him a wink. And he just keeps broad off from the old hard-faced mayor, and runs up to the squire's, who commits him on his own *committimus*. Then I gets Bob Blanker to stand '*all right*' with the squire, whose got all the say in the matter, when it's done so. I cuts like lightenin' on to far down Mississippi, and there gets Sam Slang, just one a' the keenest fellers in that line,

* Ten dollars.

PLATE III.



"He takes the law in his hands with a nigger a' mine once, and hands him over to a city policeman as soon as we lands. He didn't understand the thing, ye see, and I just put an X into the *polc's* hand, what he takes the hint at. 'Now, ye'll take good care on the feller,' says I, giving him a wink; and he just keeps broad off from the old hard-faced mayor, and runs up to the squire's, who commits him on his own *committimus*. Then I gets Bob to stand '*all right*' with the squire, whose got all the say in the matter when it's done so."



SAM SLANG PROCEEDS DOWN SOUTH WITH A FEW VERY MARKETABLE PEOPLE, AND WILL STOP AT A MISSISSIPPI PLANTATION MANSION.

about. Sam's a hotel-keeper all at once, and I gets him up afore the Mississippi squire; and as Sam don't think much about the swearin' and the squire ain't particular, *so he makes a five:* we proves straight off how the crittur's Sam's runaway, gets the dockerment and sends to Bob Blanker, who puts a blinder on the squire's eye, and gets an order to the old jailor, who must give him up, when he sees the squire's *order*. You see, it's larnin' the secret, that's the thing, and the difference between common law and nigger law; and the way to work the matter so the squire will have it all in his own fingers, and don't let the old judge get a pick. Squire makes it square, hands the nigger over to Bob, Bob puts fifty cuts on his hide, makes him as clever as a kitten, and ships him off down south afore he has time to wink. Then, ye sees, I goes back as independent as a senator from Arkansas, and sues Captain Smith for damages in detainin' the property, and I makes him pay a right round sum, what larns him never to try that agin."

Thus Romescos concludes the details of his nefarious trade, amid cheers and bravos. The party are in ecstasies, evincing a singular merriment at the issue. There is nothing like liberty—liberty to do what you please, to turn freedom into barbarity! They gloat over the privileges of a free country; and, as Romescos recounts each proceeding, —tracing it into the lowest depths of human villainy, they sing songs to right, justice, freedom—they praise the bounties of a great country. How different is the picture below! Beneath this plotting conclave, devising schemes to defraud human nature of its rights, to bring poverty and disgrace upon happy families (all in accordance with the

law), are chained in narrow cells poor mortals, hoping for an end to their dreary existence, pining under the weight of pinions dashing their very souls into endless despair. A tale of freedom is being told above, but their chains of death clank in solemn music as the midnight revelry sports with the very agony of their sorrows. Oh! who has made their lives a wanton jest?—can it be the will of heaven, or is it the birthright of a downtrodden race? They look for to-morrow, hope reverberates one happy thought, it may bring some tidings of joy; but again they sink, as that endless gloom rises before them. Hope fades from their eelings, from the bleeding heart for which compassion is dead. The tyrant's heart is of stone; what cares he for their supplications, their cries, their pleadings to heaven; such things have no dollars for him!

Arranging the preliminaries necessary for proceeding with Marston's affairs, they agreed to the plans, received orders from Graspum in reference to their proceedings on the following day, and retired to their homes, singing praises to great good laws, and the freedom of a free country.

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER SHADE OF THE PICTURE.

WHILE the proceedings we have detailed in the foregoing chapter were progressing at Graspum's slave-pen, a different phase of the system was being discussed by several persons who had assembled at the house of Deacon Rosebrook. Rumour had been busy spreading its many-sided tales about Marston—his difficulties, his connection with Graspum, his sudden downfall. All agreed that Marston was a noble-minded fellow, generous to a fault—generous in his worst errors; and, like many other southerners, who meant well, though personally kind to his slaves, never set a good example in his own person. Religion was indispensably necessary to preserve submission; and, with a view to that end, he had made the Church a means of producing it.

Now, if the southerner resorted to the Church in the purity of Christian motives, he would merit that praise which many are so willing to bestow. Or, if Christianity were embraced by the southerner with heartfelt purity and faith, it would undoubtedly have a beneficial influence, elevate the character of the slave, promote kindly feelings between him and his master, and ultimately prove profitable to both. But where Christianity (used by irreligious persons, whose very acts destroy the vitality of the means) is made the medium of enforcing superstition, and of debasing the mind of the person it degrades into submission, its

application becomes nothing less than criminal. It is criminal because it brings true religion into contempt, perverts Christianity—makes it a mockery, and gives to the degraded whites of the South a plea for discarding its precepts. Religion (were it not used as a mechanical agency) would elevate the degraded white population of the South; they would, through its influence, become valuable citizens.

These remarks have been forced upon us by observation. Frequently have we lamented its application, and grieved that its holy mission were made to serve the vilest purposes in a land of liberty, of Christian love. Religion a means of degrading the masses— a subservient agent! It is so, nevertheless; and men use it whose only desire it is to make it serve a property interest—the interest of making men, women, and children, more valuable in the market. God ordained it for a higher purpose,—man applies it for his benefit in the man-market. Hence, where the means for exercising the mind upon the right is forbidden—where ignorance becomes the necessary part of the maintenance of a system, and religion is applied to that end, it becomes farcical; and while it must combine all the imperfections of the performer, necessarily tends to confine the ignorance of those it seeks to degrade, within the narrowest boundary. There are different ways of destroying the rights of different classes; and as many different ways, after they are destroyed, of wiping out the knowledge of their ever having had rights. But, we regret to say, that most resorted to by the South, in the face of civilisation, is the Holy Scriptures, which are made the medium of blotting out all knowledge of the rights a people once possessed. The wrong-doer thus fears the result of natural laws; if they be allowed to

produce results through the cultivation of a slave's mind, such may prove fatal to his immediate interests. And to maintain a system which is based on force, the southern minister of the gospel is doubly culpable in the sight of heaven; for while he stimulates ignorance by degrading the man, he mystifies the Word of God, that he may remain for ever and ever degraded.

What a deplorable process of stealing—nay, gently taking away the knowledge which an all-wise Providence has given to man as his inheritance; how it reduces his natural immunities to sensual misery! And, too, it forbids all legitimate influences that could possibly give the menial a link to elevation, to the formation of a society of his own. We would fain shrink from such a system of debasing mankind—even more, from the hideous crimes of those who would make Scripture the means to such an end. And yet, the Church defender of slavery—the Christian little one (his neck-cloth as white as the crimes he defends are black), must distinguish his arguments; and that the world may not suspect his devotion, his honesty, his serious intention, he points us to the many blessings of the plantation-service.

Heavenly divinity! Let us have faith in the little ones sent to teach it; they tell us slavery enforces Christianity! The management of ignorance under the direction of ministers of the gospel is certainly becoming well-defined; while statesmen more energetically legalise it. The one devises, the other carries out a law to make man ignorant of everything but labour, But while the statesman moulds the theory, the preacher manufactures Scripture texts, that the menial may believe God has ordained him the pliable victim.

Under the apparent necessity of the slave world, Marston had regularly paid Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy for preaching to his property on Sundays; and to the requisite end the good Elder felt himself in duty bound to inculcate humility in all things that would promote obedience to a master's will. Of course, one sermon was quite sufficient; and this the credulous property had listened to for more than three years. The effect was entirely satisfactory, the result being that the honest property were really impressed with a belief, that to evince Christian fortitude under suffering and punishment was the best means of cleansing themselves of the sins they were born to. This formality was misnamed Christianity—it was! And through the force of this *one* sermon the Elder became indolent; and indolence led him to its natural yoke-fellow—intemperance. His indulgent moods, such as we have described him enjoying in a previous chapter, became too frequent, leading to serious annoyances. They had been especially serious for Marston, whom they placed in an awkward situation before his property, and he resolved to tolerate them no longer. Probably this resolution was hastened by the sudden discovery of Harry's singular knowledge of Scripture; be that as it may, the only difficulty in the way was to know if Harry could be so trained, that he would preach the "*right stripe*" doctrine. This, however, was soon settled, and Marston not only suspended his engagement with the Elder, but entered into a contract with the neighbouring planters, by the terms of which Harry will fill their pulpit, and preach *extempore* (the Elder has brought written sermons into contempt with Harry) at a stipulated price per Sunday. In this new

avocation—this leap from the plantation to the pulpit, Harry, as a piece of property, became extremely valuable; while, through the charm of his new black coat, he rose a great man in the estimation of the common property. Here was a valuable incentive of submission, a lesson for all bad niggers, a chance for them to improve under the peculiar institution. It proved to niggerdom what a good nigger could be if he only fear God and obey his master in all things.

Here was proof that a nigger could be something more than a nigger, in spite of southern philosophy. The Elder—good, pious man that he was—found himself out of pocket and out of preaching. Thrown upon the resources of his ingenuity, he had, in order to save the dictates of his conscience, while taking advantage of the many opportunities of making money afforded by the peculiar institution, entered upon another branch of business, having for its object the advancement of humanity. He resolved to go forth purchasing the sick and the dying; to reclaim sinking humanity and make it marketable.

But, before describing the vicissitudes through which Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy passes in his new mission of humanity, we must introduce the reader to the precincts of a neat little villa, situated at the outskirts of the city of C———. It is a small cottage surrounded with verandas and trellis-work, over which are creeping numerous woodbines and multafloras, spreading their fragrant blossoms, giving it an air of sequestered beauty. An arbour of grape-vines extends from a little portico at the front to a wicker fence that separates the embankment of a well-arranged garden, in which are pots of rare plants, beds and walks

decorated with flowers, presenting great care and taste. A few paces in the rear of the cottage are several "negro cabins" nicely white-washed without, and an air of cheerfulness and comfort reigning within. The house-servants are trimly dressed; they look and act as if their thoughts and affections were with "mas'r and missus." Their white aprons and clean bright frocks (some bombazine, and some gingham) give them an appearance of exactness, which, whether it be voluntary or force of discipline, bears evidence of attention in the slave, and encouragement on the part of the master. This is the Villa of Deacon Rosebrook; they call him deacon, by courtesy; in the same sense that Georgia majors and South Carolina generals are honoured with those far-famed titles which so distinguish them when abroad. Perhaps we should be doing the Deacon no more than justice if we were to admit that he had preached in very respectable spheres; but, feeling that he was wanting in the purity of divine love—that he could not do justice to his conscience while setting forth teachings he did not follow, he laid the profession aside for the more genial associations of plantation life. Indeed, he was what many called a very easy backslider; and at times was recognised by the somewhat singular soubriquet of Deacon Pious-proof. But he was kind to his slaves, and had projected a system singularly at variance with that of his neighbours—a system of mildness, amelioration, freedom.

His plantation, a small one, some few miles from the Villa, presented the same neatness and comfort, the same cheerfulness among the negroes, and the same kindly feeling between master and slave, which characterised the Villa.

We enter a neatly-furnished parlour, where the deacon and a friend are seated on a sofa; various pictures are suspended from the wall,—everything betokens New England neatness. The old-fashioned dog-irons and fender are polished to exquisite brightness, a Brussels carpet spreads the floor, a bright surbase encircles the room; upon the flossy hearth-rug lies crouched the little canine pet, which Aunt Dolly has washed to snowy whiteness. Aunt Dolly enters the room with a low curtsy, gently raises the poodle, then lays him down as carefully as if he were an heir to the estate. Master is happy, "missus" is happy, and Aunt Dolly is happy; and the large bookcase, filled with well-selected volumes, adds to the air of contentment everywhere apparent. In a niche stands a large pier-table, upon which are sundry volumes with gilt edges, nets of cross-work, porcelain ornaments, and card-cases inlaid with mosaic. Antique tables with massive carved feet, in imitation of lions' paws, chairs of curious patterns, reclines and ottomans of softest material, and covered with satin damask, are arranged round the room in harmony and good taste.

"Now, Mr. Scranton," the deacon says to his friend, who is a tall, prim, sedate-looking man, apparently about forty, "I pity Marston; I pity him because he is a noble-hearted fellow. But, after all, this whispering about the city may be only mother Rumour distributing her false tales. Let us hope it is all rumour and scandal. Come, tell me—what do you think of our negroes?"

"Nigger character has not changed a bit in my mind, since I came south. Inferior race of mortals, sir!—without principles, and fit only for service and submission. A

southern man knows their composition, but it takes a northern to study the philosophy—it does," replies Mr. Scranton, running his left hand over his forehead, and then his right over the crown of his head, as if to cover a bald spot with the scanty remnant of hair that projected from the sides.

The deacon smiles at the quaint reply. He knows Mr. Scranton's nortnern tenacity, and begs to differ with him. "You are ultra, a little ultra, in all things, Mr. Scranton. I fear it is that, carried out in morals as well as politics, that is fast reducing our system to degradation and tyranny. You northern gentlemen have a sort of pedantic solicitude for our rights, but you underrate our feelings upon the slavery question. I'm one among the few southerners who hold what are considered strange views: we are subjected to ridicule for our views; but it is only by those who see nothing but servitude in the negro,—nothing but dollars and cents in the institution of slavery.

Mr. Scranton is struck with astonishment, interrupts the argument by insisting upon the great superiority of the gentlemen whites, and the Bible philosophy which he can bring to sustain his argument.

"Stop one moment, my philosophic friend," the deacon interposes, earnestly. "Upon that you northerners who come out here to sustain the cause of slavery for the south, all make fools of yourselves. This continual reasoning upon Bible philosophy has lost its life, funeral dirges have been played over it, the instruments are worn out. And yet, the subject of the philosophy lives,—he belies it with his physical vigour and moral action. We doubt the sincerity of northerners; we have reasons for so doing; they

know little of the negro, and care less. Instead of assisting southerners who are inclined to do justice to the wretch—to be his friend—to improve his condition—to protect him against a tyrant's wrong, you bring us into contempt by your proclaiming virtue over the vice we acknowledge belongs to the institution. We know its defects—we fear them; but, in the name of heaven, do not defend them at the cost of virtue, truth, honesty. Do not debase us by proclaiming its glories over our heads;—do not take advantage of us by attempting to make wrong right." The deacon's feelings have become earnest; his face glows with animation.

Mr. Scranton seems discomfited. "That's just like all you southerners: you never appreciate anything we do for you. What is the good of our love, if you always doubt it?"

"Such love!" says the deacon, with a sarcastic curl on his lip. "It's cotton-bag love, as full of self as a pressed bale—"

"But, deacon; you're getting up on the question."

"Up as high as northern sincerity is low. Nothing personal," is the cool rejoinder.

Mr. Scranton inquires very seriously (wishing it particularly to be understood that he is not a fighting-man), if Deacon Rosebrook considers all northerners white-washed, ready to deceive through the dim shadows of self. The deacon's frank and manly opinion of northern editors and preachers disturbs Scranton's serious philosophy. "Cotton-bag love!" there's something in it, and contempt at the bottom, he declares within himself. And he gives a serious look, as much as to say—"go on."

"I do! He who maketh right, what those most interested

in know to be wrong, cherishes a bad motive. When a philosopher teaches doctrines that become doubtful in their ultraness, the weakness carries the insincerity,—the effort becomes stagnant. Never sell yourself to any class of evils for popularity's sake. If you attempt it you mistake the end, and sell yourself to the obscurity of a political trickster, flatttered by a few, believed by none."

"Deacon! a little more moderate. Give us credit for the good we do. Don't get excited, don't. These are ticklish times, and we northerners are quick to observe—"

"Yes, when it will turn a penny on a nigger or a bale of cotton."

"Allow me; one minute if you please!" returned Scranton, with a nasal twang peculiar to his class, as he began to work himself up into a declamatory attitudo. "You southerners don't understand what a force them northern abolitionists are bringing against you; and you know how slow you are to do things, and to let your property all go to waste while you might make a good speculation on it. There's just the difference of things: we study political economy so as to apply it to trade and such like; you let things go to waste, just thinking over it. And, you see, it's our nature to be restless and searching out the best avenues for developing trade. Why, deacon, your political philosophy would die out if the New Englander didn't edit your papers and keep your nigger principles straight."

"Nigger principles straight! Ah, indeed! Only another evidence of that cotton-bag love that has caused the banns of matrimony to be published between tyrants who disgrace us and northern speculators. The book-publisher—poor vile tool—fears to publish Mrs. Johnson's book, lest it

should contain something to offend Mrs. Colonel Sportington, at the south. Mr. Stevens, the grocer, dare not put his vote into the ballot-box for somebody, because he fears one of his customers at the south will hear of it. Parson Munson dare not speak what he thinks in a New England village, because Mrs. Bruce and Deacon Donaldson have yearly interests in slaves at the south; and old Mattock, the boot-maker, thinks it 'ant right for niggers to be in church with white folks, and declares, if they do go, they should sit away back in one corner, up stairs. He thinks about the combination that brings wealth, old age, and the grave, into one vortex,—feels little misgiving upon humanity, but loves the union, and wants nothing said about niggers. We understand what it all means, Mr. Scranton; and we can credit it for what it's worth, without making any account for its sincerity and independence. I am one among the few who go for educating the negroes, and in that education to cultivate affections between slave and master, to make encouragement perform the part of discipline, and inspire energy through proper rewards."

"What!—educate a nigger! These are pretty principles for a southerner to maintain! Why, sir, if such doctrines were advocated in body politic they would be incendiary to southern institutions. Just educate the niggers, and I wouldn't be an editor in the south two days. You'd see me tramping, bag and baggage, for the north, much as I dislike it! It would never do to educate such a miserable set of wretches as they are. You may depend what I say is true, sir. Their condition is perfectly hopeless at the north, and the more you try to learn them, the greater nuisance they become."

"Now, my good northern friend, not so fast, if you please; I can see the evil of all this, and so can you, if you will but study the negro's character a little deeper. The menial man who has passed through generations of oppression, and whose life and soul are blotted from the right of manhood, is sensitive of the power that crushes him. He has been robbed of the means of elevating himself by those who now accuse him of the crime of degradation: and, wherever the chance is afforded him of elevation, as that increases so does a tenacious knowledge of his rights; yet, he feels the prejudice that cuts and slights him in his progress, that charges him with the impudence of a negro, that calls his attempts to be a man mere pompous foolery."

"And it is so! To see a nigger setting himself up among white folks—it's perfectly ridiculous!"

"Mark me, Mr. Scranton: there's where you northerners mistake yourselves. The negro seldom desires to mix with whites, and I hold it better they should keep together; but that two races cannot live together without the one enslaving the other is a fallacy popular only with those who will not see the future, and obstinately refuse to review the past. You must lessen your delicate sensibilities; and when you make them less painful to the man of colour at tho north, believe me, the south will respond to the feeling. Experience has changed my feelings,—experience has been my teacher. I have based my new system upon experience; and its working justifies me in all I have said. Let us set about extracting the poison from our institutions, instead of losing ourselves in contemplating an abstract theory for its government."

"Remember, deacon, men are not all born to see alike.

There are rights and privileges belonging to the southerner: he holds the trade in men right, and he would see the Union sundered to atoms before he would permit the intervention of the federal government on that subject," Mr. Scranton seriously remarks, placing his two thumbs in the armpits of his vest, and assuming an air of confidence, as if to say, "I shall outsouthern the southerner yet, I shall."

"That's just the point upon which all the villainy of our institution rests: the simple word *man!*—man a progressive being; *man a chattel*,—a *thing* upon which the sordid appetite of every wretch may feed. Why cannot Africa give up men? She has been the victim of Christendom—her flesh and blood have served its traffic, have enriched its coffers, and even built its churches; but like a ferocious wolf that preys upon the fold in spite of watchers, she yet steals Afric's bleeding victims, and frowns upon them because they are not *white*, nor live as white men live."

"Mercy on me!" says Mr. Scranton, with a sigh, "you can't ameliorate the system as it stands: that's out of the question. Begin to loosen the props, and the whole fabric will tumble down. And then, niggers won't be encouraged to work at a price for their labour; and how are you going to get along in this climate, and with such an enormous population of vagabonds?"

"Remember, Mr. Scranton," ejaculated the deacon, "there's where you mistake the man in the negro; and through these arguments, set forth in your journal, we suffer. You must have contracted them by association with bad slave-owners. Mark ye! the negro has been sunk to the depths where we yet curse him; and is it right that we should keep him cursed?—to say nothing of the semi-bar-

barous position in which it finds our poor whites. He feels that his curse is *for life-time;* his hopes vibrate with its knowledge, and through it he falls from that holy inspiration that could make him a man, enjoying manhood's rights. Would not our energy yield itself a sacrifice to the same sacrificer? Had we been loaded with chains of tyranny, what would have been our condition? Would not that passion which has led the Saxon on to conquest, and spread his energy through the western world, have yielded when he saw the last shadow of hope die out, and realised that his degradation was *for life-time?* Would not the yearnings of such a consummation have recoiled to blast every action of the being who found himself a chattel? And yet this very chattel, thus yoked in death, toils on in doubts and fears, in humbleness and submission, with unrequited fortitude and affection. And still all is doubted that he does, even crushed in the prejudice against his colour!"

"Well, deacon, you perfectly startle me, to hear a southerner talk that way at the south. If you keep on, you'll soon have an abolition society without sending north for it."

"That's just what I want. I want our southerners to look upon the matter properly, and to take such steps as will set us right in the eyes of the world. Humanity is progressing with rapid strides—slavery cannot exist before it! It must fall; and we should prepare to meet it, and not be so ungrateful at least that we cannot reflect upon its worth, and give merit to whom merit is due." Thus were presented the north and south; the former loses her interests in humanity by seeking to serve the political ends of the latter.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. ROSEBROOK'S PROJECT.

At this juncture of the conversation, a sprightly, well-dressed servant opens the parlour-door, announces missus! The deacon's good lady enters. She is a perfect pattern of neatness,—a finely-developed woman of more than ordinary height, with blond features, and a countenance as full of cheerfulness as a bright May morning. She bows gracefully; her soft eyes kindle with intelligence as she approaches Mr. Scranton, who rises with the coldness of an iceberg. "Be seated, Mr. Scranton," she says, with a voice so full of gentleness,—"be seated." Her form is well-rounded, her features exquisite. Mr. Scranton views her seriously, as if he found something of great interest in that marble forehead, those fine features moulding a countenance full of soul, love, and sweetness. Her dress is of plain black brocade, made high at the neck, where it is secured with a small diamond pin, the front opening and disclosing a lace stomacher set with undressed pearls. Rufflets and diamond bracelets, of chaste workmanship, clasp her wrists; while her light auburn hair, neatly lain in plain folds, and gathered into a plait on the back of her head, where it is delicately secured with gold and silver cord, forms a soft contrast. There is chasteness and simplicity combined to represent character, sense, and refinement. She is the mother of the plantation:

old negroes call her mother, young ones clamour with joy when she visits their abodes: her very soul is in their wants; they look to her for guidance. Their happiness is her pleasure, and by sharing the good fortune that has followed them she has fostered the energy of their negroes, formed them into families, encouraged their morality, impressed them with the necessity of preserving family relations. Against the stern mandates of the law, she has taught them to read the Bible, reading and explaining it to them herself. Indeed, she has risen above the law: she has taught the more attractive ones to write; she has supplied the younger with little story-books, attractive and containing good moral lessons. She rejoices over her system: it is honest, kind, generous,—it will serve the future, and is not unprofitable at present. It is different from that pursued by those who would, through the instrumentality of bad laws, enforce ignorance. Nay, to her there is something abhorrent in using the Word of God as an excuse for the existence of slavery. Her system is practicable, enlightening first, and then enforcing that which gives encouragement to the inert faculties of our nature. Punishments were scarcely known upon her plantation; the lash never used. Old and young were made to feel themselves part and parcel of a family compact, to know they had an interest in the crop, to gather hopes for the future, to make home on the old plantation pleasant. There was something refreshing in the pride and protection evinced in the solicitation of this gentle creature for her negroes. In early life she had listened to their fables, had mixed with them as children, had enjoyed their hours of play, had studied their sympathies, and entered with delight into the

very soul of their jargon merriment. She felt their wants, and knew their grievances; she had come forward to be their protector, their mother! "Why, Mr. Scranton," she exclaims, laughingly, in reply to that gentleman's remarks, as she interrupted the conversation between him and the deacon, "we would sooner suffer than sell one of our boys or girls—even if the worst came to the worst. I know the value of family ties; I know how to manage negroes. I would just as soon think of selling our Matilda, I would! If some of you good northern folks could only see how comfortable my negroes are!——"

"Oh, yes!" interrupts the deacon, "she takes it all out of my hands; I'm going to give her the reins altogether one of these days. She has got a nice way of touching a negro's feelings so that anything can be done with him: it tells largely at times." Mr. Scranton's face becomes more serious; he doesn't seem to understand this new "nigger philosophy." "Poor creatures!" the deacon continues, "how wonderful is the power of encouragement;—how much may be done if proper means are applied——"

"The trouble is in the means," Mr. Scranton interposes, scratching his head, as if ideas were scarce, and valuable for the distance they had to be transported.

Our good lady smiles. "I cannot help smiling, Mr. Scranton." She speaks softly. "There are two things I want done—done quickly: I want southern philosophers to consider, and I want southern ladies to act—to put on energy—to take less care of themselves and more of the poor negro!" She lays her hand gently upon Mr. Scranton's arm, her soft blue eyes staring him in the face. "When they do this," she continues, "all will be well. We can

soon show the north how much can be done without their assistance. I don't believe in women's rights meetings,—not I; but I hold there should be some combination of southern ladies, to take the moral elevation of the slave into consideration,—to set about the work in good earnest, to see what can be done. It's a monster work; but monster evils can be removed if females will give their hands and hearts to the task. This separating families to serve the interests of traders in human beings must be stopped: females know the pains it inflicts on suffering wretches; they are best suited to stop that heinous offence in the sight of God and man. They must rise to the work; they must devise means to stay the waste of fortune now progressing through dissipation; and, above all other things, *they* must rise up and drive these frightful slave-dealers from their doors."

Mr. Scranton admits there is something in all this, but suggests that it were better to let the future take care of itself; there's no knowing what the future may do; and to let those who come in it enjoy our labours "aint just the policy." He contends (willing to admit how much the ladies could do if they would) it would not be consistent with the times to put forth such experiments, especially when there is so much opposition. "It wouldn't do!" he whispers.

The deacon here interrupts Mr. Scranton, by stepping to the door and ordering one of the servants to prepare refreshments.

"'It must do! It won't do!' keeps us where we are, and where we are always complaining that we never have done. You know I speak frankly, Mr. Scranton (women

may say what they please); and let me tell you, that when you do your duty it will do. Hard times never were harder than when everybody thought them hard. We must infuse principle into our poor people; we must make them earnest in agricultural pursuits; we must elevate the character of labour; we must encourage the mechanic, and give tone to his pursuits; and, more than all, we must arrest the spread of conventional nonsense, and develope our natural resources by establishing a system of paid labour, and removing the odium which attaches itself to those who pursue such avocations as the slave may be engaged in. My word for it, Mr. Scranton, there's where the trouble lies. Nature has been lavish in her good gifts to the south; but we must lend Nature a helping hand,—we must be the women of the south for the south's good; and we must break down those social barriers clogging our progress. Nature wants good government to go along with her, to be her handfellow in regeneration; but good government must give Nature her rights. This done, slavery will cease to spread its loathsome diseases through the body politic, virtue will be protected and receive its rewards, and the buds of prosperity will be nourished with energy and ripen into greatness."

Mr. Scranton suggests that the nigger question was forced upon him, and thinks it better to change the conversation. Mr. Scranton was once in Congress, thinks a deal of his Congressional experience, and declares, with great seriousness, that the nigger question will come to something one of these days. "Ah! bless me, madam," he says, adjusting his arms, "you talk—very—like—a—statesman. Southerners better leave all this regenerating of slaves to you. But let me say, whatever you may see in perspective, it's mighty

dangerous when you move such principles to practice. Mark me! you'll have to pull down the iron walls of the south, make planters of different minds, drive self out of mankind, and overthrow the northern speculator's cotton-bag love. You've got a great work before you, my dear madam,—a work that'll want an extended lease of your life-time. Remember how hard it is to convince man of the wrong of anything that's profitable. A paid system, even emancipation, would have been a small affair in 1824 or 1827. Old niggers and prime fellows were then of little value; now it is different. You may see the obstacle to your project in the Nashville Convention or Georgia platform——"

"Nashville Convention, indeed!" exclaims Mrs. Rosebrook, her face infused with animation, and a curl of disdain on her lip. "Such things! Mere happy illustrations of the folly of our political affairs. The one was an exotic do-nothing got up by mister wanting to say something, who soon gets ashamed of his mission; the other was a mixture of political log-rolling, got up by those who wanted to tell the *Union* not to mind the Nashville Convention. What a pity they did not tell the Union to be patient with us! We must have no more Nashville Conventions; we must change Georgia platforms for individual enterprise,—southern conventions for moral regeneration. Give us these changes, and we shall show you what can be done without the aid of the north." Several servants in tidy dresses, their white aprons looking so clean, come bustling into the room and invite missus and her guest into an airy ante-room, where a table is bountifully spread with cake, fruit, fine old Madeira, and lemonade. Mr. Scranton bows and asks "the pleasure;" Mrs. Rosebrook acknowledgingly

takes his arm, while the negroes bow and scrape as they enter the room. Mr. Scranton stands a few moments gazing at the set-out. "I hope Mr. Scranton will make himself quite at home," the good lady interposes. Everything was so exquisitely arranged, so set off with fresh-plucked flowers, as if some magic hand had just touched the whole.

"Now!" continued Mrs. Rosebrook, motioning her head as she points to the table: "you'll admit my negroes can do something? *Poor helpless wretches*, we say continually: perhaps they are worse when bad owners can make the world look upon them through northern prejudice. They are just like children; nobody gives them credit for being anything else; and yet they can do much for our good. It would trouble some persons to arrange a table so neatly; my boys did it all, you see!" And she exults over the efficiency of her negroes, who stand at her side acknowledging the compliment with broad grins. The deacon helps Mr. Scranton, who commences stowing away the sweetmeats with great gusto. "It is truly surprising what charming nigger property you have got. They don't seem a bit like niggers," he concludes, taking an elaborate mouthful. Mrs. Rosebrook, pleased at the honest remark, reminds him that the deacon carries out her views most charmingly, that she studies negro character, and knows that by stimulating it with little things she promotes good. She studies character while the deacon studies politics. At the same time, she rather ironically reminds Mr. Scranton that the deacon is not guilty of reading any long-winded articles on "state rights and secession." "Not he!" she says, laughingly; "you don't catch him with such cast-iron

material in his head. They call him pious-proof now and then, but he's progress all over."

Mr. Scranton, attentive to his appetite, draws a serious face, gives a side glance, begs a negro to supply his plate anew, and reckons he may soon make a new discovery in southern political economy. But he fears Mrs. Rosebrook's plan will make a mongrel, the specific nature of which it would be difficult to define in philosophy. Perhaps it will not be acceptable to the north as a thinking people, nor will it please the generosity of southern ladies.

"There is where the trouble lies!" exclaimed the deacon, who had until then yielded up the discussion to his good lady. "They look upon our system with distrust, as if it were something they could not understand."

"I move we don't say another word about it, but take our part quietly," says Mrs. Rosebrook, insinuating that Mr. Scranton had better be left to take his refreshment comfortably; that he is a little misanthropic; that he must be cheered up. "Come, my boys" (directing her conversation to the negroes), "see that Mr. Scranton is cared for. And you must summon Daddy; tell him to get the carriage ready, to put on his best blue coat,—that we are going to take Mr. Scranton over the plantation, to show him how things can prosper when we ladies take a hand in the management." The negro leaves to execute the order: Mr. Scranton remains mute, now and then sipping his wine. He imagines himself in a small paradise, but "hadn't the least idea how it was made such a place by niggers." Why, they are just the smartest things in the shape of property that could be started up. Regular dandy niggers, dressed up to "shine so," they set him thinking there was some-

thing in his politics not just straight. And then, there was so much intelligence, so much politeness about the critters! Why, if it had not been for the doctrines he had so long held, he would have felt bashful at his want of ease and suavity, —things seldom taught in the New England village where our pro-slavery advocate was born and educated.

Presently servants are seen outside, running here and there, their eyes glistening with anxiety, as if preparing for a May-day festival. Old Dolly, the cook, shining with the importance of her profession, stands her greasy portions in the kitchen door, scolds away at old Dad, whose face smiles with good-nature as he fusses over the carriage, wipes it, rubs it, and brushes it, every now and then stoppi g to see if it will reflect his full black face. Little woolly-headed urchins are toddling round old Maum Dolly, pulling the folds of her frock, teasing for cakes and fritters. One, more expert in mischief, has perched himself in an aperture over the door, substituting himself for the old black hat with which it is usually filled. Here, his face like a full moon in a cloud, he twists his moving fingers into the ingeniously-tied knot of Dolly's bandana, which he cunningly draws from her head. Ben and Loblolly, two minor sprats of the race, are seated in the centre of the yard, contending for the leaves of a picture-book, which, to appease their characteristic inquisitiveness, they have dissected. Daddy has the horses ready and the carriage waiting; and Uncle Bradshaw, the coachman, and Cæsar, the likely fellow, wait at the door with as much satisfaction expressed in their faces as if it were all for them Missus is not to be outdone in expertness: a few minutes

ago she was "snaring" Mr. Scranton with his own philosophy; now she is ready to take her seat.

"Missus! I wants t' go down yander wid ye, I doe," says Daddy, approaching her with hand extended, and working his black face up into a broad grin as he detects Mr. Scranton's awkwardness in getting into the carriage.

"Certainly, Daddy, certainly: you shall go. Daddy knows how to get alongside of Aunt Rachel when he gets down on the plantation. He knows where to get a good cup of coffee and a waff." And she pats the old negro on the head as he clambers up on the box. "No, him aint dat. Daddy want t' go wid missus—ya'h, ya! dat him, tis. Missus want somebody down da'h what spry, so'e take care on 'em round de old plantation. Takes my missus to know what nigger is," says Daddy, taking off his cap, and bowing missus into the carriage.

"Not one word for mas'r, eh, Daddy?" rejoins the deacon, looking playfully at Daddy. "Why, Boss, you aint nofin whin missus about," returns Daddy, tauntingly, as he buttons his grey coat, and tells Bradshaw to "go ahead!" Away they go, galloping over the plain, through the swamp, for the plantation,—that model experiment doubted by so many. Major Sprag, the politician, and Judge Snow, the statesman, had declared publicly it never would do any good. With them it was not practical,—it gave negroes too much liberty; and they declared the system must be kept within the narrowest sphere of law, or it would be destroyed for ever.

Onward the carriage bounded, and long before it reached the plantation gate was espied by the negroes, who came

sallying forth from their white cabins, crying out at the top of their voices—"Missus comin'! Missus comin! Da'h missus—dat she! I know'd missus wa' comin' t' day!" and the music of their voices re-echoed through the arbour of oaks that lined the road. Their tongues seemed to have taken new impulse for the occasion. The dogs, at full run, came barking to the gate; old daddies and mammas, with faces "all over smiles," followed in the train. And they were dressed so tidily, looked so cheerful, and gave such expressions of their exuberant feelings, that Mr. Scranton seemed quite at a loss how to account for it. He had never before witnessed such a mingling of fondness for owners,—the welcome sounds of "God bless good missus!" They were at variance with the misanthropic ideas he had imbibed at the north. And then there was a regular retinue of the "small-fry property" bringing up the rear, with curious faces, and making the jargon more confounding with the music of their voices. They toddled, screamed, and shouted, clustered around the gate, and before Daddy had time to dismount, had it wide open, and were contending for the palm of shaking missus by the hand "fust."

The carriage drives to the plantation house, followed by the train of moving darkness, flocking around it like as many devotees before an object of superstitious worship. Mas'r is only a secondary consideration, Missus is the angel of their thoughts; her kindness and perseverance in their behalf has softened their feelings—stimulated their energy. How touching is the fondness and tenderness of these degraded mortals! They love their benefactor. And, too, there is a lesson in it worthy the statesman's consideration,—it

shows a knowledge of right, and a deep sense of gratitude for kindness bestowed. Mrs. Rosebrook alights from the carriage, receives their warm congratulations, and, turning to Mr. Scranton, touches him on the arm, and remarks:—"Now, here they are. Poor old bodies," (taking them by the hand in rotation), just like as many children. "What do you think of them, Mr. Scranton? do you not find a softening sympathy creeping upon you? I forgot, though, your political responsibility! Ah! that is the point with statesmen. You feel a touch of conscience once in a while, but cannot speak for fear of the consequences." And she laughs heartily at Mr. Scranton, who draws his face into a very serious length. "Pest the niggers!" he says, as they gather at his feet, making all sorts of importune questions.

"My good lady is a regular reformer, you see, Mr. Scranton," rejoins the deacon, as he follows that gentleman into the hall.

Mr. Scranton remarks, in reply, that such does not become caste, and two pompous-looking servants set upon him brushing the dirt from his clothes with great good earnest. The negroes understand Mr. Scranton at a glance; he is an amiable stoic!

Mrs. Rosebrook disappears for a few minutes, and returns minus her bonnet and mantle. She delights to have the old and the young around her,—to study their characters, to hear their stories, their grievances, and to relieve their wants. "These little black imps," she says, patting them on the head as they toddle around her, "They're just as full of interest as their shiny black skins are full of mischief;"

and one after another, with hand extended, they seek a recognition; and she takes them in her arms, fondling them with the affection of a nurse.

"Here's Toby, too; the little cunning rascal! He is as sleek as a mole, a young coon," she ejaculates, stooping down and playfully working her fingers over Toby's crispy hair, as he sits upon the grass in front of the house, feasting on a huge sweet potato, with which he has so bedaubed his face that it looks like a mask with the terrific portrayed in the rolling of two immense white eyes. "And here is Nichol Garvie!" and she turns to another, pats him on the head, and shakes his hand. "We mean to make a great man of him, you see, - he has head enough to make a Congress man; who knows but that he'll get there when he grows up?"

"Congress, happily, is beyond niggers," replies Mr. Scranton, approving the lady: "Congress is pure yet!" Turning round, she recommends Mr. Scranton to put his northern prejudices in his pocket, where they will be safe when required for the purposes of the south. "A nigger 's a nigger all over the world," rejoins Mr. Scranton, significantly shrugging his shoulders and casting a doubtful glance at the young type.

"True! true!" she returns, giving Mr. Scranton a look of pity. "God give us sight to see! We praise our forefathers—honest praise!—but we forget what they did. They brought them here, poor wretches; decoyed them, deceived them,—and now we wish them back at the very time it would be impossible to live without them. How happy is the mind that believes a 'nigger' must be a nigger for ever and ever; and that we must do all in our power to keep him from being anything else!" And her soft blue eyes glowed with

sympathy; it was the soul of a noble woman intent on doing good. She had stepped from the darkness of a political error into the airy height of light and love.

Daddy and Bradshaw had taken care of the horses; the deacon greeted his negroes as one by one they came to welcome him; and for each he had a kind word, a joke, a shake of the hand, or an enquiry about some missing member of a family. The scene presented an interesting picture—the interest, policy, and good faith between master and slave. No sooner were the horses cared for, than Daddy and Bradshaw started for the "cabins," to say welcome to the old folks, "a heap a' how de" to the gals, and tell de boys, down yander, in de tater patch, dat *Missus* come. They must have their touching congratulations, interchange the news of the city for the gossip of the plantation, and drink the cup of tea Mamma makes for the occasion. Soon the plantation is all agog; and the homely, but neat cabins, swarm with negroes of all ages, bustling here and there, and making preparations for the evening supper, which Aunt Peggy, the cook, has been instructed to prepare in her very best style.

The deacon joins his good lady, and, with Mr. Scranton, they prepare to walk over and view the plantation. They are followed by a retinue of old and young property, giving vent to their thoughts in expressions of gratitude to Missus and Mas'r. A broad expanse of rural beauty stretches towards the west, soft and enchanting. The sun is sinking into the curtains of a refulgent cloud; its crimson light casts a mellow shade over the broad landscape; the evening breeze is wafting coolly over the foliage, a welcome relief to the scorching heat of mid-day; the balmy atmosphere

breathes sweetness over the whole. To the north stands a clump of fine old oaks, high above the distant "bottom," reflecting in all their richness the warm tints of the setting sun. The leaves rustle as they pass along; long lines of cotton plants, with their healthy blossoms, brighten in the evening shade; the corn bends under its fruit; the potato field looks fresh and luxuriant, and negroes are gathering from the slip-beds supplies of market gardening. There is but one appearance among the workers — cheerfulness! They welcome Mas'r as he passes along; and again busily employ themselves, hoeing, weeding, and working at the roots of vines in search of destructive insects.

"My overseers are all black, every one! I would'nt have a white one; they are mostly tyrants," says the deacon, looking at his fields, exultingly. "And my overseers plan out the very best mode of planting. They get through a heap of work, with a little kindness and a little management. Those two things do a deal, Sir! Five years ago, I projected this new system of managing negroes—or, rather my lady planned it,—she is a great manager, you see,—and I adopted it. You see how it has worked, Mr. Scranton." The deacon takes Mr. Scranton by the arm, pointing over the broad expanse of cultivated land, bending under the harvest. I make all my negroes marry when they have arrived at a specific age; I assure them I never will sell one unless he or she commits a heinous crime; and I never have. There is a great deal in keeping faith with a negro; he is of mankind, and moved by natural laws mentally and physically, and feels deeply the want of what we rarely regard of much consequence—confidence in his master's word. Wife encourages their moral energy; I encourage their

physical by filling their bellies with as much corn and bacon as they can eat; and then I give them five cents per day (the heads of families) to get those little necessaries which are so essential to their comfort and encouragement. I call it our paid-labour system; and I give them tasks, too, and when they have finished them I allow a small stipend for extra work. It's a small mite for a great end; and it's such an encouragement with them that I get about thirty per cent. more work done. And then I allow them to read just as much as they please—what do I care about law? I don't want to live where learning to read is dangerous to the State, I dont't. Their learning to read never can destroy their affections for me and wife; and kindness to them will make them less dangerous in case of insurrection. It's not the education we've got to fear; our fears increase with the knowledge of our oppression. They know these things—they feel them; and if by educating them one can cultivate their confidence, had we not better do it with a view to contingencies? Now, as the result of our system, we have promised to give all our negroes their freedom at the expiration of ten years, and send such as wish to go, to Liberia; but, I hold that they can do as much for us at home, work for us if properly encouraged, and be good free citizens, obedient to the laws of the State, serving the general good of a great country."

"Yes!" the good lady interposes: "I want to see those things carried out; they will yet work for the regeneration of their own race. Heaven will some day reward the hand that drags the cursed mantle from off poor Africa; and Africa herself will breathe a prayer to Heaven in grateful acknowledgment of the act that frees her from the stain of

being the world's bonded warehouse for human flesh and blood."

The deacon interrupts,—suggests "that it were better to move practically; and that small streams may yet direct how a mountain may be removed. Our Union is a great monument of what a Republic may be,—a happy combination of life, freshness, and greatness, upon which the Old World looks with distrust. The people have founded its happiness—its greatness! God alone knows its destiny; crowned heads would not weep over its downfall! It were better each citizen felt his heart beating to the words—*It is my country; cursed be the hand raised to sever its members!*" The lady tells Mr. Scranton that their produce has increased every year; that last year they planted one hundred and twenty acres with cotton, ninety with corn, forty with sweet potatoes, as many more with slips and roots; and three acres of water-melons for the boys, which they may eat or sell. She assures him that by encouraging the pay system they get a double profit, besides preparing the way for something that must come.

"Come!" Mr. Scranton interrupts: "let the south be true to herself, and there's no fear of that. But I confess, deacon, there is something good as well as curious about your way of treating niggers." And Mr. Scranton shakes his head, as if the practicability yet remained the great obstacle in his mind. "Your niggers ain't every body's," he concludes.

"Try it, try it!" Mrs. Rosebrook rejoins: "Go home and propound something that will relieve us from fear—something that will prepare us for any crisis that may occur!"

It was six o'clock, the plantation bell struck, and the cry

sounded "All hands quit work, and repair to supper!" Scarcely had the echoes resounded over the woods when the labourers were seen scampering for their cabins, in great glee. They jumped, danced, jostled one another, and sang the cheering melody, "Sally put da' hoe cake down!" and "Down in Old Tennessee."

Reaching their cabins they gathered into a conclave around Daddy and Bradshaw, making the very air resound with their merry jargon. Such a happy meeting—such social congratulations, pouring forth of the heart's affections, warm and true,—it had never been before Mr. Scranton's fortune to witness. Indeed, when he listened to the ready flashes of dialogue accompanying their animation, and saw the strange contortions of their fresh, shining faces, he began to "reckon" there was *something* about niggers that might, by a process not yet discovered, be turned into *something*.

Old "Mammies" strive for the honour of having Daddy and Bradshaw sup at *their* cabins, taunting each other on the spareness of their meal. Fires are soon lit, the stew-pans brought into requisition, and the smoke, curling upward among a myriad of mosquitoes, is dispersing them like a band of unwelcome intruders; while the corn-mills rattle and rumble, making the din and clatter more confounding. Daddy and Bradshaw being "aristocratic darkies from the city"—caste being tenaciously kept up among negroes—were, of course, recipients of the choicest delicacies the plantation afforded, not excepting fresh eggs poached, and possum. Bradshaw is particularly fond of ghost stories; and as old Maum Nancy deals largely in this article, as well as being the best believer in spectres on the plantation, he

concludes to sup with her, in her hospitable cabin, when she will relate all that she has seen since she last saw him. Maum Nancy is as black as a crow, has a rich store of tales on hand; she will please the old man, more particularly when she tells him about the very bad ghost seen about the mansion for more than "three weeks of nights." He has got two sarpents' heads; Maum Nancy declares the statement true, for uncle Enoch "seen him," (he is a grey ghost), and might a' knocked him over with his wattle, only he darn't lest he should reek his vengeance at some unexpected moment. And then he was the very worst kind of a ghost, for he stole all the chickens, not even leaving the feathers. They said he had a tail like the thing Mas'r Sluck whipped his "niggers" with. Bradshaw sups of Maum Nancy's best, listening to her stories with great concern. The story of the ghost with two heads startles him; his black picture frame fills with excitement; he has never before heard that ghosts were guilty of predatory crimes. So enchained and excited is he with her story, that the party at the house having finished supper, have made preparations to leave for the city. A finger touches him on the shoulder; he startles, recognises Daddy, who is in search of him, and suddenly becomes conscious that his absence has caused great anxiety. Daddy has found him quietly eating Maum Nancy's cakes, while intently listening to the story about the ghost "*what*" steals all her chickens. He is quite unconcerned about Mas'r, Missus—anything but the ghost! He catches his cap, gives Nancy's hand a warm shake, says God bless 'em, hastens for the mansion, finds the carriage waiting at the door, for Mas'r and Missus, who take their seats as he arrives. Bradshaw mounts the box

again, and away it rolls down the oak avenue. The happy party leave for home; the plantation people are turned out *en masse* to say good buy to Missus, and "hope Mas'r get safe home." Their greetings sound forth as the carriage disappears in the distance; fainter and fainter the good wish falls upon their ears. They are well on the road; Mr. Scranton, who sits at the side of the good lady, on the back seat, has not deigned to say a word: the evening grows dark, and his mind seems correspondingly gloomy. "I tell you, I feel so pleased, so overjoyed, and so happy when I visit the plantation, to see those poor creatures so happy and so full of fondness! It's worth all the riches to know that one is loved by the poor. Did you ever see such happiness, Mr. Scranton?" Mrs. Rosebrook enquires, coolly.

"It requires a great deal of thinking, a great deal of caution, a great deal of political foresight, before answering such questions. You'll pardon me, my dear madam, I know you will; I always speak square on questions, you know. It's hard to reconcile oneself to niggers being free."

"Ah! yes—it's very amiable to think; but how much more praiseworthy to act! If we southern ladies set ourselves about it we can do a great deal; we can save the poor creatures being sold, like cows and calves, in this free country. We must save ourselves from the moral degradation that is upon us. What a pity Marston's friends did not make an effort to change his course! If they had he would not now be in the hands of that Graspum. We are surrounded by a world of temptation; and yet our planters yield to them; they think everything a certainty, forgetting that the moment they fall into Graspum's hands they are gone.

Mr. Scranton acknowledges he likes the look of things on the plantation, but suggests that it will be considered an innovation,—an innovation too dangerous to be considered. Innovations are dangerous with him,—unpopular, cannot amount to much practical good. He gives these insinuations merely as happy expressions of his own profound opinion. The carriage approaches the villa, which, seen from the distance, seems sleeping in the calm of night. Mr. Scranton is like those among us who are always fearing, but never make an effort to remove the cause; they, too, are doggedly attached to political inconsistency, and, though at times led to see the evil, never can be made to acknowledge the wrong. They reach the garden gate; Mr. Scranton begs to be excused from entering the Villa,—takes a formal leave of his friend, and wends his way home, thinking. "There's something in it!" he says to himself, as he passes the old bridge that separates the city from the suburb. "It's not so much for the present as it is for the hereafter. Nobody thinks of repairing this old bridge, and yet it has been decaying under our eyes for years. Some day it will suddenly fall,—a dozen people will be precipitated into the water below, some killed; the city will then resound with lamentations; every bodyknows it must take place one of these days, everybody is to blame, but no special criminal can be found. There's something in the comparison!" he says, looking over the old railing into the water. And then his thoughts wandered to the plantation. There the germs of an enlightened policy were growing up; the purity of a noble woman's heart was spreading blessings among a downcast race, cultivating their minds, raising them up to do good for themselves, to reward the efforts of the benefactor.

Her motto was:—Let us through simple means seek the elevation of a class of beings whose degradation has distracted the political wisdom of our happy country, from its conquest to the present day. "There's something in it," again mutters Mr. Scranton, as he enters his room, lights his taper, and with his elbow resting on the table, his head supported in his hand, sits musing over the subject.

CHAPTER XII.

ELDER PEMBERTON PRAISEWORTHY CHANGES HIS BUSINESS.

Let us beg the reader's indulgence for a few moments, while we say that Mr. Scranton belonged to that large class of servile flatterers who too often come from the New England States—men, who, having no direct interest in slaves, make no scruple of sacrificing their independence that they may appear truo to the south and slavery. Such men not unfrequently do the political vampirism of the south without receiving its thanks, but look for the respect of political factions for being loudest supporters of inconsistency. They never receive the thanks of the southerner; frequently and deservedly do they sink into contempt!

A few days after the visit to the plantation we have described in the foregoing chapter, Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy, divested of his pastoral occupation, and seriously anxious to keep up his friendly associations with those who had taken a part in furthering the cause of humanity, calls on his old acquaintance, Mrs. Rosebrook. He has always found a welcome under her hospitable roof,—a good meal, over which he could discourse the benefits he bestowed, through his spiritual mission, upon a fallen race; never leaving without kindly asking permission to offer up a prayer, in which he invoked the mercy of the Supreme Ruler

over all things. In this instance he seems somewhat downcast, forlorn; he has changed his business; his brown, lean face, small peering eyes, and low forehead, with bristly black hair standing erect, give his features a careworn air. He apologises for the unceremonious call, and says he always forgets etiquette in his fervour to do good; to serve his fellow-creatures, to be a Christian among the living, and serve the dying and the dead—if such have wants—is his motto. And that his motives may not be misconstrued he has come to report the peculiar phases of the business he found it actually necessary to turn his hand to. That he will gain a complete mastery over the devil he has not the fraction of a doubt; and as he has always (deeming him less harmless than many citizens of the south), had strong prejudices against that gentleman, he now has strong expectations of carrying his point against him. Elder Praiseworthy once heard a great statesman (who said singular things as well in as out of Congress) say that he did'nt believe the devil was a bad fellow after all; and that with a little more schooling he might make a very useful gentleman to prevent duelling—in a word, that there was no knowing how we'd get along at the south without such an all-important personage. He has had several spells of deep thinking on this point, which, though he cannot exactly agree with it, he holds firmly to the belief that, so far as it affects duelling, the devil should be one of the principals, and he, being specially ordained, the great antagonist to demolish him with his chosen weapon—humanity.

"They tell me you have gone back into the world," says Mrs. Rosebrook, as the waiter hands Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy a chair. "It's only the duty of love, of Christian

goodness, he humbly replies, and takes his seat as Mrs. Rosebrook says—"pray be seated!"

"I'm somewhat fatigued; but it's the fatigue of loving to do good, he says, rubbing his hands very piously, and giving a look of great ministerial seriousness at the good lady. We will omit several minor portions of the Elder's cautious introduction of his humane occupation, commencing where he sets forth the kind reasons for such a virtuous policy. "You honestly think you are serving the Lord, do you?" enquires the lady, as she takes her seat.

The Elder evinces surprise at such a question. Hath he moved among Christians so many years, ministering to spiritual wants, and yet the purity of his motives be questioned? "Good madam! we must have faith to believe. All that is meant well should be accepted in the greatness of the intention. You will observe, I am neither a lawyer nor a politician; I would'nt be for the world! We must always be doing something for the good of others; and we must not forget, whilst we are doing it, to serve the Allwise one; and while we are effecting the good of one we are serving the designs of the other." Thus emphatically spoke the Elder, fingering a book that lay on the table. "I buy sick people, I save the dying, and I instruct them in the ways of the Lord as soon as they are cured, and—" And here the Elder suddenly stops.

"Add, Mr. Praiseworthy, that when you have cured them, and instructed them in the way of the Lord, you sell them!" interrupts the lady, watching the sudden changes that pass over his craven features.

"I always get them good masters; I never fail in that. Nor do I stand upon the profit—it's the humanity I takes

into the balance." He conceives good under the motley garb of his new mission.

"Humanity—strange humanity, with self coiled beneath. Why, Mr. Praiseworthy!" the lady starts from her seat, and speaks with emphasis, "do you tell me that you have become a resurrection man, standing at the platform of death, interposing with it for a speculation?"

"It's no uncommon business, Madam; hundreds follow it; some have got rich at it."

"Got rich at it!" Mrs. Rosebrook interrupts, as a sagacious looking cat bounds on the table, much to the discomfiture of the Elder, who jumps up in a great fright,—"What irresistible natures we have; may heaven save us from the cravings of avarice!"

The Elder very methodically puts the interrupting cat upon the floor, and resumes his seat. "Why, bless us, good madam, we must have something to keep our consciences clear; there's nothing like living a straightforward life."

"What a horrible inconsistency! Buying the sick and the dying. May the dead not come in for a portion of your singular generosity? If you can speculate in the dying why exclude the dead? the principle would serve the same faith in Christianity. The heart that can purchase the dying must be full of sad coldness, dragging the woes and pains of mortality down to a tortuous death. Save us from the feelings of speculation,—call them Christian, if you will,—that makes man look upon a dying mortal, valuing but the dollars and cents that are passing away with his life," she interrupts, giving vent to her pent-up feelings.

Mr. Praiseworthy suggests that the good lady does not

comprehend the virtue lying beneath his motives; that it takes a philosophical mind to analyse the good that can be done to human nature, especially poor black human nature. And he asserts, with great sincerity, that saving the lives of those about to die miserable deaths is a wonderful thing for the cause of humanity. Buying them saves their hopeless lives; and if that isn't praiseworthy nothing can be, and when the act is good the motive should not be questioned.

"Do you save their lives for a Christian purpose, or is it lucre you seek, Mr. Praiseworthy?" she enquires, giving the Elder a significant look, and waiting for a reply.

The Elder rises sedately, and walks across the room, considering his reply. "The question's so kind of round about," he mutters, as she continues:—

"Sick when you purchase, your Christianity consists in the art of healing; but you sell them, and consequently save their lives for a profit. There is no cholera in our plantation, thank God! you cannot speculate on our sick. You outshine the London street Jews; they deal in old clothes, you deal in human oddities, tottering infirmity, sick negroes." Mrs. Rosebrook suggests that such a business in a great and happy country should be consigned to its grave-digger and executioner, or made to pay a killing income tax.

The humane Elder views his clothes; they have become somewhat threadbare since he entered upon his new profession. He, as may be supposed, feels the force of the lady's remarks, and yet cannot bring his mind to believe himself actuated by anything but a love to do good. Kindness, he contends, was always the most inherent thing in his nature: it is an insult to insinuate anything degrading

connected with his calling. And, too, there is another consolation which soars above all,—it is legal, and there is a respectability connected with all legal callings.

"To be upright is my motto, madam," the Elder says, drawing his hand modestly over his mouth, and again adjusting the tie of his white neck-cloth. "I'm trying to save them, and a penny with them. You see—the Lord forgive him!—my dear madam, Marston didn't do the clean thing with me; and, the worst of all was, he made a preacher of that nigger of his. The principle is a very bad one for nigger property to contend for; and when their masters permit it, our profession is upset; for, whenever a nigger becomes a preacher, he's sure to be a profitable investment for his owner. There is where it injures us; and we have no redress, because the nigger preacher is his master's property, and his master can make him preach, or do what he pleases with him," says Mr. Praiseworthy, becoming extremely serious.

"Ah! yes,—self pinches the principles; I see where it is, Elder," says the lady. But you were indiscreet, given to *taking* at times; and the boy Harry, proving himself quite as good at preaching, destroyed your practice. I wish every negro knew as much of the Bible as that boy Harry. There would be no fear of insurrections; it would be the greatest blessing that ever befell the South. It would make some of your Christians blush,—perhaps ashamed."

"Ashamed! ashamed! a thing little used the way times are," he mutters, fretting his fingers through his bristly hair, until it stands erect like quills on a porcupine's back. This done, he measuredly adjusts his glasses on the tip of

his nose, giving his tawny visage an appearance at once strange and indicative of all the peculiarities of his peculiar character. "It wasn't that," he says, "Marston did'nt get dissatisfied with my spiritual conditions; it was the saving made by the negro's preaching. But, to my new business, which so touches your sensitive feelings. If you will honour me, my dear madam, with a visit at my hospital, I am certain your impressions will change, and you will do justice to my motives."

"Indeed!" interrupts the lady, quickly, "nothing would give me more gratification,—I esteem any person engaged in a laudable pursuit; but if philanthropy be expressed through the frailties of speculation,—especially where it is carried out in the buying and selling of afflicted men and women,—I am willing to admit the age of progress to have got ahead of me. However, Elder, I suppose you go upon the principle of what is not lost to sin being gained to the Lord: and if your sick property die pious, the knowledge of it is a sufficient recompense for the loss." Thus saying, she readily accepted the Elder's kind invitation, and, ordering a basket of prepared nourishment, which, together with the carriage, was soon ready, she accompanied him to his infirmary. They drove through narrow lanes and streets, lined with small dilapidated cottages, and reached a wooden tenement near the suburb of the city of C———. It was surrounded by a lattice fence, the approach being through a gate, on which was inscribed, "Mr. Praiseworthy's Infirmary;" and immediately below this, in small letters, was the significant notice, "Planters having the cholera and other prevailing diseases upon their plantations will please take notice that I am prepared to pay the

highest price for the infirm and other negroes attacked with the disease. Offers will be made for the most doubtful cases!"

"Elder Praiseworthy!" ejaculates the lady, starting back, and stopping to read the strange sign. "'Offers will be made for the most doubtful cases!'" she mutters, turning towards him with a look of melancholy. "What thoughts, feelings, sentiments! That means, that unto death you have a pecuniary interest in their bodies; and, for a price, you will interpose between their owners and death. The mind so grotesque as to conceive such a purpose should be restrained, lest it trifle with life unconsciously."

"You see," interrupts Mr. Praiseworthy, looking more serious than ever, "It's the life saved to the nigger; he's grateful for it; and if they ain't pious just then, it gives them time to consider, to prepare themselves. My little per centage is small—it's a mean commission; and if it were not for the satisfaction of knowing how much good I do, it wouldn't begin to pay a professional gentleman." As the Elder concludes his remarks, melancholy sounds are breaking forth in frightful discord. From strange murmurings it rises into loud wailings and implorings. "Take me, good Lord, to a world of peace!" sounds in her ears, as they approach through a garden and enter a door that opens into a long room, a store-house of human infirmity, where moans, cries, and groans are made a medium of traffic. The room, about thirty feet long and twenty wide, is rough-boarded, contains three tiers of narrow berths, one above the other, encircling its walls. Here and there on the floor are cots, which Mr. Praiseworthy informs us are for those whose cases he would not give much for. Black nurses

are busily attending the sick property; some are carrying bowls of gruel, others rubbing limbs and quieting the cries of the frantic, and again supplying water to quench thirst. On a round table that stands in the centre of the room is a large medicine-chest, disclosing papers, pills, powders, phials, and plasters, strewn about in great disorder. A bedlam of ghastly faces presents itself,—dark, haggard, and frantic with the pains of the malady preying upon the victims. One poor wretch springs from his couch, crying, "Oh, d.ath! death! come soon!" and his features glare with terror. Again he utters a wild shriek, and bounds round the room, looking madly at one and another, as if chased by some furious animal. The figure of a female, whose elongated body seems ready to sink under its disease, sits on a little box in the corner, humming a dolorous air, and looking with glassy eyes pensively around the room at those stretched in their berths. For a few seconds she is quiet; then, contorting her face into a deep scowl, she gives vent to the most violent bursts of passion,—holds her long black hair above her head, assumes a tragic attitude, threatens to distort it from the scalp. "That one's lost her mind—she's fitty; but I think the devil has something to do with her fits. And, though you wouldn't think it, she's just as harmless as can be," Mr. Praiseworthy coolly remarks, looking at Mrs. Rosebrook, hoping she will say something encouraging in reply. The lady only replies by asking him if he purchased her from her owner?

Mr. Praiseworthy responds in the affirmative, adding that she doesn't seem to like it much. He, however, has strong hopes of curing her mind, getting it "in fix" again, and making a good penny on her. "She's a'most white,

and, unfortunately, took a liking to a young man down town. Marston owned her then, and, being a friend of hers, wouldn't allow it, and it took away her senses; he thought her malady incurable, and sold her to me for a little or nothing," he continues, with great complacency.

This poor broken flower of misfortune holds down her head as the lady approaches, gives a look of melancholy expressive of shame and remorse. "She's sensitive for a nigger, and the only one that has said anything about being put among men," Mr. Praiseworthy remarks, advancing a few steps, and then going from berth to berth, descanting on the prospects of his sick, explaining their various diseases, their improvements, and his doubts of the dying. The lady watches all his movements, as if more intently interested in Mr. Praiseworthy's strange character. "And here's one," he says, "I fear I shall lose; and if I do, there's fifty dollars gone, slap!" and he points to an emaciated yellow man, whose body is literally a crust of sores, and whose painful implorings for water and nourishment are deep and touching.

"Poor wretch!" Mr. Praiseworthy exclaims, "I wish I'd never bought him—it's pained my feelings so; but I did it to save his life when he was most dead with the rheumatics, and was drawn up as crooked as branch cord-wood. And then, after I had got the *cinques* out of him—after nearly getting him straight for a 'prime fellow' (good care did the thing), he took the water on the chest, and is grown out like that." He points coolly to the sufferer's breast, which is fearfully distended with disease; saying that, "as if that wasn't enough, he took the lepors, and it's a squeak if they don't end him." He pities the

"crittur," but has done all he can for him, which he would have done if he hadn't expected a copper for selling him when cured. "So you see, madam," he reiterates, "it isn't all profit. I paid a good price for the poor skeleton, have had all my trouble, and shall have no gain—except the recompense of feeling. There was a time when I might have shared one hundred and fifty dollars by him, but I felt humane towards him; didn't want him to slide until he was a No. 1." Thus the Elder sets forth his own goodness of heart.

"Pray, what do you pay a head for them, Mr. Praiseworthy?" enquires the lady, smoothing her hand over the feverish head of the poor victim, as the carnatic of her cheek changed to pallid languor. Pursuing her object with calmness, she determined not to display her emotions until fully satisfied how far the Elder would go.

"That, madam, depends on cases; cripples are not worth much. But, now and then, we get a legless fellow what's sound in body, can get round sprightly, and such like; and, seeing how we can make him answer a sight of purposes, he'll bring something," he sedately replies, with muscles unmoved. "Cases what doctors give up as 'done gone,' we gets for ten and twenty dollars; cases not hanging under other diseases, we give from thirty to fifty—and so on! Remember, however, you must deduct thirty per cent. for death. At times, where you would make two or three hundred dollars by curing one, and saving his life, you lose three, sometimes half-a-dozen head." The Elder consoles his feelings with the fact that it is not all profit, looks highly gratified, puts a large cut of tobacco in his mouth, thanks God that the common school-bill didn't pass in the

legislature, and that his business is more humane than people generally admit.

"How many have you in all?"

"The number of head, I suppose? Well, there's about thirty sick, and ten well ones what I sent to market last week. Did-n-'t—make-a—good market, though," he drawls out.

"You are alone in the business?"

"Well, no; I've a partner—Jones; there's a good many phases in the business, you see, and one can't get along. Jones was a nigger-broker, and Jones and me went into partnership to do the thing smooth up, on joint account. I does the curing, and he does the selling, and we both turns a dollar or two—"

"Oh, horrors!" interrupts the lady, looking at Mr. Praiseworthy sarcastically. "Murder will out, men's sentiments will betray them, selfishness will get above them all; ornament them as you will, their ornaments will drop,—naked self will uncover herself and be the deceiver."

"Not at all!" the Elder exclaims, in his confidence. "The Lord's will is in everything; without it we could not battle with the devil; we relieve suffering humanity, and the end justifies the means."

"You should have left out the means: it is only the end you aim at."

"That's like accusing Deacon Seabury of impious motives, because he *shaves* notes at an illegal interest. It's worse—because what the law makes legal the church should not make sinful." This is Praiseworthy's philosophy, which he proclaims while forgetting the existence of a law of conscience having higher claims than the technicalities of

statutes. We must look to that to modify our selfishness, to strengthen our love for human laws when founded in justice.

"And who is this poor girl?" enquires Mrs. Rosebrook, stepping softly forward, and taking her by the hand.

"Marston's once; some Indian in her, they say. She's right fair looks when she's herself. Marston's in trouble now, and the cholera has made sad havoc of his niggers," Mr. Praiseworthy replies, placing a chair, and motioning his hand for the lady to be seated. The lady seats herself beside the girl,—takes her hand.

"Yes, missus; God bless good missus. Ye don't know me now," mutters the poor girl, raising her wild glassy eyes, as she parts the long black hair from her forehead: "you don't know me; I'm changed so!"

"My child, who has made you this wretch?" says the good lady, pressing her tawny hand.

"My child!" she exclaims, with emphasis: "My child Nicholas,—my child! Missus, save Nicholas; he is my child. Oh! do save him!" and, as if terrified, she grasps tighter the lady's hand, while her emotions swell into a frantic outburst of grief. "Nicholas, my child!" she shrieks,

"She will come to, soon: it's only one of her strange fits of aberration. Sometimes I fling cold water over her; and, if it's very cold, she soon comes to," Mr. Praiseworthy remarks, as he stands unmoved, probably contemplating the goodness of a forgiving God. What magic simplicity lies concealed in his nature; and yet it is his trade, sanctioned by the law of a generous state. Let us bless the land that has given us power to discover the depths to which human nature can reduce itself, and what man can

make himself when human flesh and blood become mere things of traffic.

"That gal's name is Ellen. I wish I knew all that has turned up at Marston's," remarks the Elder.

"Ellen!" ejaculates the lady, looking at her more intently, placing her left hand under her chin. "Not Ellen Juvarne?"

"Yes, good missus (the lady has distributed her nourishment among the sick); that's my name," she says, raising her eyes with a look of melancholy that tells the tale of her troubles. Again her feelings subside into quiet; she seems in meditation. "I knowed you once, good missus, but you don't know me now, I'm changed so!" she whispers, the good lady holding her hand, as a tear courses down her cheek—"I'm changed so!" she whispers, shaking her head.

CHAPTER XII.

A FATHER TRIES TO BE A FATHER.

WE have conducted the reader through scenes perhaps unnecessary to our narration, nevertheless associated with and appertaining to the object of our work. And, in this sense, the reader cannot fail to draw from them lessons developing the corrupting influences of a body politic that gives one man power to sell another. They go to prove how soon a man may forget himself,—how soon he may become a demon in the practice of abominations, how soon he can reconcile himself to things that outrage the most sacred ties of our social being. And, too, consoling h self with the usages of society, making it right, gives himself up to the most barbarous practices.

When we left Marston in a former chapter, he had become sensible of the wrong he so long assisted to inflict upon innocent and defenceless persons; and, stung with remorse made painful by the weight of misfortune, had avowed his object of saving his children. Yet, strange as it may seem, so inured were his feelings to those arbitrary customs which slave-owners are educated to view as privileges guaranteed in the rights of a peculiar institution (the rights of property in the being slave), that, although conscious of his duty toward the children, no sooner had the mother of Nicholas been attacked with cholera, than he sold her to the Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy, in whose

infirmary we have just left her. The Elder, since his discharge from parochial life,—from ministering the gospel, has transferred his mission to that of being the partner in a firm, the ostensible business of which is purchasing the sick, the living, and the dying.

Do not blush, reader; you know not how elastic dealing in human kind makes man's feelings. Gold is the beacon-light of avarice; for it man will climb over a catacomb of the dead. In this instance the very man (Marston), who, touched by misfortune, began to cherish a father's natural feelings, could see nothing but property in the mother, though he knew that mother to be born free. Perhaps it was not without some compunction of feelings—perhaps it was done to soften the separation at that moment so necessary to the preservation of the children. But we must leave this phase of the picture, and turn to another.

Graspum had diligently watched Marston's affairs, and, through the cunning and perseverance of Romescos, carefully noted every movement on the plantation. Each death from cholera was reported,—the change in Marston's feelings observed and provided against,—every stage of the crop carefully watched. Graspum, however, had secured himself in the real estate, and gave little heed to the epidemic that was carrying off the negro property. Finally, to pass over several stages in the decline of Marston's affairs, the ravages of the disease continued until but forty-three negroes, old and young, were left on the old homestead. The culminating point had arrived. He was in the grasp of Graspum, and nothing could save him from utter ruin. It had lately been proved that the Rovero family, instead of being rich, were extremely poor, their plantation having

long been under a mortgage, the holder of which was threatening foreclosure.

With Marston, an amount of promiscuous debts had accumulated so far beyond his expectation that he was without means of discharging them. His affairs became more and more confused, while the amount of his liabilities remained a perfect obscurity to the community. Rumour began to disseminate his troubles, suspicion summoned her charges, and town-talk left little unadded; while those of his creditors who had been least suspicious of his wealth and honour became the most importunate applicants for their claims. At length, driven by the pressure of the times, he calls Clotilda to him, and tells her that he is resolved to send Annette and Nicholas into the city, where they will remain in the care of a coloured woman, until an opportunity offers of sending them to the north. He is fond of Clotilda,—tells her of the excitement concerning his business affairs, and impresses her with the necessity of preserving calmness; it is requisite to the evasion of any ulterior consequence that may be brought upon him. Everything hangs upon a thread—a political thread, a lawful thread—a thread that holds the fate of thirty, forty, or fifty human beings—that separates them from that verge of uncertainty upon which a straw may turn the weal or woe of their lives. When I get them comfortably cared for, Clotilda, I will send for you. Nicholas's mother has gone, but you shall be a mother to them both," he says, looking upon her seriously, as if contemplating the trouble before him in the attempt to rescue his children.

"You will not send Annette away without me?" she inquires, quickly, falling on her knees at his side, and re-

iterating, "Don't send Annette away without me,—don't, mas'r!"

"The separation will only be for a few days. Annette shall be educated (I care not for the laws of our free land against it), and together you shall go where your parentage will not shame you,—where you may ornament society," he replies, as Clotilda's face lights up with satisfaction. With such an assurance (she does not comprehend the tenour of his troubles), her freedom seems at hand: it excites her to joy. Marston retires and she takes his seat, writes a note to Maxwell, who is then in the city, relating what has transpired, and concluding with a request that he will call and see her.

A few days passed, and the two children were sent into the city and placed in the charge of a free woman, with instructions to keep them secreted for several weeks. This movement being discovered by Romescos, was the first signal for an onset of creditors. Graspum, always first to secure himself, in this instance compelled Marston to succumb to his demands by threatening to disclose the crime Lorenzo had committed. Forcing him to fulfil the obligation in the bond, he took formal possession of the plantation. This increased the suspicion of fraud; there was a mystery somewhere,—nobody could solve it. Marston, even his former friends declared, was a swindler. He could not be honestly indebted in so large an amount to Graspum; nor could he be so connected with such persons without something being wrong somewhere. Friends began to insinuate that they had been misled; and not a few among those who had enjoyed his hospitality were first inclined to scandalise his integrity. Graspum had foreseen all this, and, with

Romescos, who had purloined the bill of sale, was prepared to do any amount of swearing. Marston is a victim of circumstances; his proud spirit prompts him to preserve from disgrace the name of his family, and thus he the more easily yielded to the demands of the betrayer. Hence, Graspum, secure in his ill-gotten booty, leaves his victim to struggle with those who come after him.

A few weeks pass over, and the equity of Graspum's claim is questioned: his character for honour being doubted, gives rise to much comment. The whole thing is denounced —proclaimed a concerted movement to defraud the rightful creditors. And yet, knowing the supremacy of money over law in a slave state, Graspum's power, the revenge his followers inflict, and their desperate character, not one dare come forward to test the validity of the debt. They know and fear the fierce penalty: they are forced to fall back,—to seize his person, his property, his personal effects.

In this dilemma, Marston repairs to the city, attempts to make an arrangement with his creditors, singularly fails; he can effect nothing. Wherever he goes his salutation meets a cold, measured response; whisper marks him a swindler. The knife stabs deep into the already festered wound. Misfortune bears heavily upon a sensitive mind; but accusation of wrong, when struggling under trials, stabs deepest into the heart, and bears its victim suffering to the very depths of despair.

To add to this combination of misfortunes, on his return to the plantation he found it deserted,—a sheriff's keeper guarding his personal effects, his few remaining negroes seized upon and marched into the city for the satisfaction of his debts. Clotilda has been seized upon, manacled, driven

to the city, committed to prison. Another creditor has found out the hiding-place of the children; directs the sheriff, who seizes upon them, like property of their kind, and drags them to prison. Oh, that prison walls were made for torturing the innocent!

Marston is left poor upon the world; Ellen Juvarne is in the hands of a resurrectionist; Nicholas—a bright boy he has grown—is within the dark confines of a prison cell, along with Clotilda and Annette. Melancholy broods over the plantation now. The act of justice,—the right which Marston saw through wrong, and which he had intended to carry out,—is now beyond his power. Stripped of those comforts he had enjoyed, his offspring carried off as trophies of avarice,—perhaps for sale to some ruffian who would set a price upon their beauty,—he sits down, sick at heart, and weeps a child's tears. The mansion, so long the scene of pleasure and hospitality, is like a deserted barracks,—still, gloomy, cold, in the absence of familiar faces. No servant comes to call him master,—Dandy and Enock are gone; and those familiar words, so significant of affection between master and slave, "Glad to see ye home, mas'r," no longer sounded in his ears. Even his overseer has become alarmed, and like the rest levied for arrears of wages.

There is nothing for Marston but to give up all,—to leave the home of his childhood, his manhood, his happier days. He is suddenly reminded that there is virtue in fortitude; and, as he gazes round the room, the relics of happier days redouble his conviction of the evil he has brought upon himself by straying from the paths of rectitude. Indeed, so sudden was his fall from distinction, that the scene around him seemed like a dream, from which he had just awoke to

question its precipitancy. "A sheriff is here now, and I am a mere being of sufferance," he says, casting a moody glance around the room, as if contemplating the dark prospect before him. A few moments' pause, and he rises, walks to the window, looks out upon the serene scene spread out before the mansion. There is the river, on which he has spent so many pleasant hours, calmly winding its way through deep green foliage mellowed by the moonlight. Its beauties only remind him of the past. He walks away,—struggles to forget, to look above his trials. He goes to the old side-board that has so long given forth its cheer; that, too, is locked! "Locked to me!" he says, attempting to open its doors. A sheriff's lock hangs upon them. Accustomed to every indulgence, each check vibrated doubt upon his honour, wounding his feelings. The smaller the restraint the deeper did it pierce his heart. While in this desponding mood, vainly endeavouring to gain resolution to carry him through, a gentle rap is heard at the door. Who can it be at this hour? he questions to himself. No servant is near him; servants have all been led into captivity for the satisfaction of debts. He approaches the door and opens it himself, looking cautiously into the corridor. There, crouched in a niche, alternately presenting fear and joy,—fear lest he be seen by the enemy, and joy to see his master,—is a dark figure with the familiar face of Daddy Bob,—Bob of the old plantation. The old, faithful servant puts out his wrinkled hand nervously, saying, "Oh, good mas'r!" He has looked up to Marston with the same love that an affectionate child does to a kind parent; he has enjoyed mas'r's warm welcome, nurtured his confidence,

had his say in directing the affairs of the plantation, and watched the frailties that threatened it.

"Why, Daddy Bob! Can it be you?" Marston says, modulating his voice, as a change comes over his feelings.

"Dis is me, mas'r; it is me," again says the old man. He is wet with the night dew, but his heart is warm and affectionate. Marston seizes his hand as if to return the old man's gratitude, and leads him into the room, smiling. "Sit down, Bob, sit down!" he says, handing him a chair. The old servant stands at the chair hesitatingly, doubting his position. "Fear nothing, Bob; sit down. You are my best friend," Marston continues. Bob takes a seat, lays his cap quietly upon the floor, smiles to see old mas'r, but don't feel just right because there's something wrong: he draws the laps of his jacket together, covers the remnant of a shirt. "Mas'r, what be da' gwine to do wid de old plantation? Tings, Bob reckon, b'nt gwine straight," he speaks, looking at Marston shyly. The old slave knew his master's heart, and had waited for him to unfold its beatings; but the kind heart of the master yielded to the burden that was upon it, and never more so than when moved by the strong attachment evinced by the old man. There was mutual sympathy pourtrayed in the tenderest emotions. The one was full of grief, and, if touched by the word of a friend, would overflow; the other was susceptible of kindness, knew something had befallen his master, and was ready to present the best proofs of his attachment.

"And how did you get here, my old faithful?" inquires Marston, drawing nearer to him.

"Well, mas'r, ye see, t'ant just so wid nigger what don'

know how tings is! But, Bob up t' dese tings. I sees Buckra, what look as if he hab no rights on dis plantation, grab'n up all de folks. And Lor,' mas'r, old Bob could'nt leave mas'r no how. An, den, when da' begins to chain de folks up—da' chain up old Rachel, mas'r!—Old Bob feel so de plantation war'nt no-whare; and him time t'be gwine. Da'h an't gwine t' cotch old Bob, and carry 'm way from mas'r, so I jist cum possum ober dem—stows away yander, down close in de old corn crib,—"

"And you eluded the sheriff to take care of me, did you, Daddy?" interrupts Marston, and again takes the old man's hand.

"Oh, mas'r, Bob ain't white, but 'is feelins get so fo' h mas'r, he can't speak 'em," the old slave replies, pearls glistening in his eyes. "My feelings feel so, I can't speak 'em!" And with a brother's fondness he shakes his master's hand.

We must beg the reader's indulgence here for the purpose of making a few remarks upon the negro's power of observation. From the many strange disquisitions that have been put forward on the mental qualities of the man of colour—more particularly the African—few can be selected which have not had for their object his disqualification. His power of observation has been much undervalued; but it has been chiefly by those who judge him by a superficial scale, or from a selfish motive. In the position of mere property, he is, of necessity, compelled to yield all claims to mental elevation. And yet, forced to degradation, there are few negroes on the plantation, or in the spheres of labour, who do not note the rise and fall of their master's fortunes, study the nature and prospects of the crop, make enquiries about

the market, concoct the best economy in managing lands, and consult among themselves as to what would promote the interests of the whole. So far is this carried out, that in many districts a rivalry for the largest amount of crop on a given space is carried on among the slaves, who not unfrequently "chafe" each other upon the superior wealth and talent of their masters. It is a well-known fact, that John C. Calhoun's slaves, in addition to being extremely fond of him, were proud and boastful of his talent.

Daddy Bob is an exemplification. The faithful old slave had become sensible of something wrong on the plantation: he saw the sheriff seizing upon the families, secreted himself in the corn crib, and fled to the woods when they were out of sight. Here, sheltered by the myrtle, he remained until midnight, intently watching the mansion for signs of old mas'r." Suddenly a light glimmers from the window; the old slave's feelings bound with joy; he feels it an invitation for him to return, and, leaving his hiding-place, approaches the house stealthily, and descries his master at the window. Confidence returns, his joy is complete, his hopes have not misled him. Hungry and wet, he has found his way back to master, whose face at the window gladdens his heart,—carries him beyond the bounds of caution. Hence the cordial greeting between the old slave and his indulgent master. We hear the oft-expressed words—"Master! I love ye, I do!" Marston gets a candle, lights the old man to a bed in the attic, bids him good night, and retires.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH THE EXTREMES ARE PRESENTED.

WHILE the gloomy prospect we have just presented hovered over Marston's plantation, proceedings of no minor importance, and having reference to this particular case, are going on in and about the city. Maxwell, moved by Clotilda's implorings, had promised to gain her freedom for her; but he knew the penalty, feared the result of a failure, and had hesitated to make the attempt. The consequences were upon him, he saw the want of prompt action, and regretted that the time for carrying his resolution into effect had passed. The result harassed him; he saw this daughter of misfortune, on her bended knees, breathing a prayer to Omnipotence for the deliverance of her child; he remembered her appeal to him, imploring him to deliver her from the grasp of slavery, from that licentiousness which the female slave is compelled to bear. He saw her confiding in him as a deliverer,—the sight haunted him unto madness! Her child! her child! Yes, that offspring in which her hopes were centered! For it she pleaded and pleaded; for it she offered to sacrifice her own happiness; for it she invoked the all-protecting hand. That child, doomed to a life of chattel misery; to serve the lusts of modern barbarism in a country where freedom and civilization sound praises

from ocean to ocean; to be obscured in the darkness and cruelty of an institution in which justice is scoffed, where distress has no listeners, and the trap-keepers of men's souls scorn to make honest recompense while human flesh and blood are weighed in the scale of dollars and cents! He trembles before the sad picture; remonstrances and entreaties from him will be in vain; nor can he seize them and carry them off. His life might be forfeited in the attempt, even were they without prison walls. No! it is almost hopeless. In the narrow confines of a securely grated cell, where thoughts and anxieties waste the soul in disappointment, and where hopes only come and go to spread time with grief, he could only see her and her child as they suffered. The spectacle had no charm; and those who carried them into captivity for the satisfaction of paltry debts could not be made to divest themselves of the self in nature. Cries and sobs were nothing,—such were poor stock for "niggers" to have; pains and anxieties were at a discount, chivalry proclaimed its rule, and nothing was thought well of that lessened the market value of body and soul. Among great, generous, hospitable, and chivalrous men, such things could only be weighed in the common scale of trade.

Again, Maxwell remembered that Marston had unfolded his troubles to him, and being a mere stranger the confidence warranted mutual reciprocity. If it were merely an act dictated by the impulse of his feelings at that moment, the secret was now laid broadly open. He was father of the children, and, sensible of their critical situation, the sting was goading him to their rescue. The question was—would he interpose and declare them as such? Ah, he forgot!

it was not the father's assertion,—it was the law. The crime of being property was inherited from the mother. Acknowledging them his children would neither satisfy law nor the creditors. What honourable — we except the modernly chivalrous—man would see his children jostled by the ruffian trader? What man, with feelings less sensitive than iron, would see his child sold to the *man-vender* for purposes so impious that heaven and earth frowned upon them? And yet the scene was no uncommon one; slavery affords the medium, and men, laying their hearts aside, make it serve their pockets. Those whom it would insult to call less than gentlemen have covered their scruples with the law, while consigning their own offspring to the hand of an auctioneer. Man property is subvervient material,—woman is even more; for where her virtue forms its tissues, and can be sold, the issue is indeed deplorable. Again, where vice is made a pleasure, and the offspring of it become a burden on our hands, slavery affords the most convenient medium of getting rid of the incumbrance. They sell it, perhaps profitably, and console themselves with the happy recollection of what a great thing it is to live in a free country, where one may get rid of such things profitably. It may save our shame in the eyes of man, but God sees all,—records the wrong!

Thus Maxwell contemplated the prospects before him. At length he resolved to visit Marston upon his plantation, impress him with the necessity of asserting their freedom, in order to save them from being sold with the effects of the estate.

He visits Marston's mansion,—finds the picture sadly changed; his generous friend, who has entertained him so

hospitably, sits in a little ante-chamber, pensively, as if something of importance has absorbed his attention. No well-dressed servants welcome him with their smiles and grimaces; no Franconia greets him with her vivacity, her pleasing conversation, her frankness and fondness for the old servants. No table is decked out with the viands of the season—Marston's viands have turned into troubles,—loneliness reigns throughout. It is night, and nothing but the dull sound of the keeper's tread breaks the silence. His (Maxwell's) mission is a delicate one. It may be construed as intrusive, he thinks. But its importance outweighs the doubt, and, though he approaches with caution, is received with that embrace of friendship which a gentleman can claim as his own when he feels the justice of the mission of him who approaches, even though its tenor be painful. Maxwell hesitated for a few moments, looked silently upon the scene. Trouble had already left its prints of sadness upon Marston's countenance; the past, full of happy associations, floated in his mind; the future—ah! that was——. Happily, at that moment, he had been contemplating the means by which he could save Clotilda and the children. He rises, approaches Maxwell, hands him a chair, listens to his proposal. "If I can assist you, we will save them," concludes Maxwell.

"That," he replies, doubtingly, "my good friend, has engaged my thoughts by night and day—has made me most uneasy. Misfortune likes sympathy; your words are as soothing as praiseworthy. I will defend my children if every creditor call me swindler. I will destroy the infernal bill of sale,—I will crush the hell-born paper that gives life to deeds so bloody,—I will free them from the shame!" Thus,

his feelings excited to the uttermost, he rises from his seat, approaches a cupboard, draws forth the small trunk we have before described, unlocks it. "That fatal document is here, I put it here, I will destroy it now; I will save them through its destruction. There shall be no evidence of Clotilda's mother being a slave, oh no!" he mutters rapidly, running his fingers over packages, papers, and documents. Again he glances vacantly over the whole file, examining paper after paper, carefully. He looks in vain. It is not there; there is no document so fatal. Sharper men have taken better care of it. "It is not here!" he whispers, his countenance becoming pallid and death-like. "Not here!"—and they will swear to suit their purposes. Oaths are only worth what they bring in the market, among slave dealers. But, who can have taken it?" he continues, looking wildly at Maxwell. Consternation is pictured on his countenance; he feels there is intrigue at work, and that the want of that paper will prove fatal to his resolution. A man in trouble always confides in others, sometimes those whom he would scarce have trusted before. He throws the paper aside, takes a seat at Maxwell's side, grasps him by the hand, saying, "My friend! save them! save them! save them! Use what stratagem you please; make it the experiment of your life. Consummate it, and a penitent's prayer will bless you! I see the impending catastrophe——"

"We may do without it; be quiet. Let your feelings calm. I have consulted Franconia on the same subject. Woman can do much if she will; and she has promised me she will. My knowledge of her womanly nature tells me she will be true to Clotilda!" Maxwell speaks assuringly, and his words seem as balm to a wounded spirit.

The bill of sale was among the things intended for a more profitable use. Marston has satisfied Graspum's claim; but he knew that slavery deadened the sensibilities of men. Yet, could it have so deadened Graspum's feeling that he would have been found in a plot against him? No! he could not believe it. He would not look for foul play from that quarter. It might have been mislaid—if lost, all the better. A second thought, and he begins to quiet himself with the belief that it had become extinct; that, there not being evidence to prove them property, his word would be sufficient to procure their release. Somewhat relieved of the force of parental anxiety—we can call it by no other name—the troubled planter, with his troubles inherited, promises Maxwell, who has postponed his departure that he may aid in saving Clotilde and her child, that he will proceed direct to the sheriff's office, give notice of their freedom to that functionary, and forbid the sale. Upon this resolution they part for the night, and on the following morning, Marston, sick at heart, leaves for the city, hoping to make arrangements with his attorney, who will serve notice of freedom with all the expense and legality of form.

The reader will excuse us for passing over many things of minor importance which take place during the progress of arrangements between Marston and the attorney, Mr. Dyson—(commonly called Thomas Dyson, Esq., wonderfully clever in the practice of slave law)—and proceeding to where we find the notice formally served. The document forbids the sale of certain persons, physically and mentally described, according to the nicest rules of law and tenour of trade; and is, with the dignity of legal proceedings, served on the honourable sheriff. We give a portion of it, for those who are not

informed on such curious matters: it runs thus:—"'The girl Clotilda—aged 27 years; her child Annette—aged 7 years, and a remarkable boy, Nicholas, 6 years old, all negroes, levied upon at the suit of ——, to satisfy a *fi fa* issued from the ——, and set forth to be the property of Hugh Marston of ——, &c. &c.;'" as set forth in the writ of attachment. Thus runs the curious law, based on privilege, not principle.

The document served on the sheriff, Marston resolved to remain a few days in the city and watch its effect. The sheriff, who is seldom supposed to evince sympathy in his duties, conforms with the ordinary routine of law in nigger cases; and, in his turn, gives notice to the plaintiff, who is required to enter security for the purpose of testing the point of freedom. Freedom here is a slender commodity; it can be sworn away for a small compensation. Mr. Anthony Romescos has peculiar talent that way, and his services are always in the market. The point, however, has not resolved itself into that peculiar position where it must be either a matter of compromise, or a question for the court and jury to decide.

If Marston, now sensible of his position as father of the children, will yield them a sacrifice to the man trader, it is in his power; the creditors will make it their profit. Who, then, can solve the perplexity for him? The custom of society, pointing the finger of shame, denies him the right to acknowledge them his children. Society has established the licentious wrong,—the law protects it, custom enforces it. He can only proceed by declaring the mother to be a free woman, and leaving the producing proof to convict her o being slave property to the plaintiff. In doing this, h i judgment wars with his softer feelings. Custom (though it

has nothing to give him), is goading him with its advice; it tells him to abandon the unfashionable, unpolite scheme. Natural laws have given birth to natural feelings—natural affections are stronger than bad laws. They burn with our nature,—they warm the gentle, inspire the noble, and awake the daring that lies unmoved until it be called into action for the rescue of those for whom our affections have taken life.

Things had arrived at that particular poise where law-lovers—we mean lawyers—look on with happy consciences and pleasing expectations; that is, they had arrived at that certain hinge of slave law the turn of which sends men, women, and children, into the vortex of slavery, where their hopes are for ever crushed. One day Marston had strong hopes of saving them; but his hopes vanished on the next. The fair creature, by him made a wretch, seemed before him, on her bended knees, clasping his hand while imploring him to save her child. The very thought would have doubly nerved him to action; and yet, what mattered such action against the force of slavery injustice? All his exertions, all his pleadings, all his protestations, in a land where liberty boasts its greatness, would sink to nothing under the power he had placed in their possession for his overthrow.

With this fatal scene before him, this indecision, he walked the streets, resolving and re-resolving, weighing and re-weighing the consequences, hoping without a chance for hope. He would be a father as he has been a kind master; but the law says, no! no! Society forbids right, the law crushes justice,—the justice of heaven! Marston is like one driven from his home, from the scene of his happy childhood, upon which he can now only look back to make the present more painful. He has fallen from the full flow

of pleasure and wealth to the low ebb of poverty clothed in suspicion; he is homeless, and fast becoming friendless. A few days after, as he takes his morning walk, he is pointed to the painful fact, made known through certain legal documents, posted at certain corners of streets, that his "negro property" is advertised for sale by the sheriff. He fears his legal notice has done little legal good, except to the legal gentlemen who receive the costs. He retires to a saloon, finds the morning paper, commences glancing over its legal columns. The waiter is surprised to see him at that hour, is ignorant of the war of trouble that is waging within him, knows him only as a great man, a rice planter of wealth in negroes, treats him with becoming civility, and enquires, with a polite bow, what he will be served with. He wants nothing that will supply the physical man. He has supped on trouble,—the following, painful as it is, will serve him for breakfast; it meets his eye as he traces down the column:—

"SHERIFF'S SALE.

"According to former notice, will be sold on the first Tuesday in September next, between the usual hours of sale, before the Court House door, in this city, the following property—to wit!

"Three yoke of prime oxen, and four carts.

"Seven horses; two of celebrated breed.

"Twenty-two mules, together with sundry other effects as per previous schedule, which will be produced at the sale, when the property will be pointed out. The said being levied on as the property of Hugh Marston, of —— District, and sold to satisfy a *fi fa* issued from the Superior Court, W. W. C——.

"Also the following gang of negroes, many of whom have been accustomed to the cultivation of cotton and rice. Said negroes are very prime and orderly, having been well trained and fed, in addition to enjoying the benefit of Christian teaching through a Sunday-school worship on the plantation.

"Dandy, and Enock (yellow), prime house servants.

"Choate, and Cato, aged 29 and 32, coachman and blacksmith.

"Harry, a prime fellow of remarkable sagacity, said to be very pious, and has been very valuable as a preacher.

"Seventeen prime field hands, ranging from 17 to 63 years old, together with sundry children, set forth in the schedule.

"Peggy, aged 23 years, an excellent cook, house servant—can do almost any work, is faithful and strictly honest.

"Rachel, one of the very best wenches in the County; has had charge of the Manor for several years, is very motherly and well disposed, and fully capable of taking charge of a plantation."

The description of the negro property continues until it reaches the last and most touching point, which Marston reads with tears coursing down his cheeks. But, it is only trade, and it is refreshing to see how much talent the auctioneer (himself a distinguished politician)—exhibits in displaying his bill. It is that which has worked itself so deep into Marston's feelings.

"Clotilda, a white negro, and her child Annette; together with Nicholas (a bright boy, remarkably intelligent), six years old. "These last," adds the list, "have been well brought up, with great care, and are extremely

promising and pleasant when speaking. The woman has superior looks, is sometimes called beautiful, has finely developed features, and is considered to be the handsomest *bright woman* in the county."

We acknowledge the italics to be ours. The list, displaying great competency in the trade of human beings, concludes with warranting them sound and healthy, informing all those in want of such property of the wonderful opportunity of purchasing, and offering to guarantee its qualities. The above being "levied on to satisfy three *fi fas*," &c. &c.

Poor Clotilda! her beauty has betrayed her: her mother was made a slave, and she has inherited the sin which the enlightened of the western world say shall be handed down from generation to generation until time itself has an end. She is within the damp walls of a narrow cell; the cold stones give forth their moisture to chill her bleeding heart; the rust of oppression cuts into her very soul. The warm sunlight of heaven, once so cheering, has now turned black and cold to her. She sits in that cold confine, full with sorrow, hope, and expectation, awaiting her doom, like a culprit who measures the chances of escape between him and the gallows. She thinks of Marston. "He was a kind friend to me — he was a good master," she says, little thinking that at that very moment he sits in the saloon reading that southern death-warrant which dooms so many to a life of woe. Fathers were not mentioned—his feelings were spared that pain; mothers' tears, too, were omitted, lest the sensitiveness of the fashionable world should be touched. Pained, and sick at heart,—stung by remorse at finding himself without power to relieve her,—Marston rises from his seat, and makes arrangements to return to his plantation.

CHAPTER XV.

A SCENE OF MANY LIGHTS.

We must leave Marston wending his way for the old plantation, and pass to another phase of this complicated affair. In doing this, we must leave the reader to draw from his own imagination much that must have transpired previous to the present incidents.

The Rovero family (old and distinguished) had struggled against the misfortunes brought upon them by their son Lorenzo. Deeply involved, they had allowed their difficulties to go on till they had found themselves living by the favour of courtesy and indulgence. Lorenzo and Franconia were only children; and since the departure of the former the latter had been the idol of their indulgence. She was, as we have before said, delicate, sensitive, endowed with generous impulses, and admired for her gentleness, grace, and vivacity. To these she added firmness, and, when once resolved upon any object, could not be moved from her purpose. Nor was she (as is the popular fallacy of the South) susceptible to the influence of wealth. Her love and tenderness soared above it; she prized wealth less than moral worth. But she could not appease the pride of her parents with her feelings. They, labouring under the influence of their reduced fortunes, had favoured and insisted upon the advances of the very wealthy Colonel M'Carstrow, a rice-planter, who had a few years before inherited a large

estate. The colonel is a sturdy specimen of the Southern gentleman, which combines a singular mixture of qualities, some of which are represented by a love of good living, good drinking, good horse-racing, good gambling, and fast company. He lives on the fat of the land, because the fat of the land was made for him to enjoy. He has no particular objection to anybody in the world, providing they believe in slavery, and live according to his notions of a gentleman. His soul's delight is *faro*, which he would not exchange for all the religion in the world; he has strong doubts about the good of religion, which, he says, should be boxed up with modern morality.

Laying these things aside, however, he is anything but what would have been properly selected as a partner for Franconia; and, while she is only eighteen, he has turned the corner of his forty-third year. In a word, his manners are unmodelled, his feelings coarse, his associations of the worst kind; nor is he adapted to make the happiness of domestic life lasting. He is one of those persons so often met with, whose affections (if they may be supposed to have any), are held in a sort of compromise between an incitement to love, and their natural inclination to revel in voluptuous pleasures. The two being antagonistic at times, the latter is sure to be the stronger, and not unfrequently carries its victim into dissolute extremes. Riches, however, will always weigh heavy in the scale; their possession sways,—the charm of gold is precious and powerful. And, too, the colonel had another attraction (very much esteemed among slave-dealers and owners), he had a military title, though no one knew how he came by it.

Franconia must be the affianced bride of the supposed

wealthy Colonel M'Carstrow; so say her parents, who feel they are being crushed out by misfortune. It is their desire; and, however repulsive it may be to Franconia's feelings, she must accept the man: she must forget his years, his habits, his associations, for the wealth he can bring to the relief of the family.

To add *éclat* to the event, it is arranged that the nuptial ceremony shall take place in the spacious old mansion of General P——, in the city. General P—— is a distant relation of the Rovero family. His mansion is one of those noble old edifices, met here and there in the South (especially in South Carolina), which strongly mark the grandeur of their ancient occupants. It is a massive pile of marble, of mixed style of Grecian and Doric architecture, with three stories divided by projecting trellised arbours, and ornamented with fluted columns surmounted with ingeniously-worked and sculptured capitals, set off with grotesque figures. The front is ornamented with tablets of bas-relief, variegated and chaste. These are bordered with scroll-work, chases of flowers, graces, and historical designs. Around the lower story, palisades and curvatures project here and there between the divisions, forming bowers shaded by vines and sweet-scented blossoms. These are diffusing their fragrance through the spacious halls and corridors beneath. The stately old pile wears a romantic appearance; but it has grown brown with decay, and stands in dumb testimony of that taste and feeling which prevailed among its British founders. The garden in which it stands, once rich with the choicest flowers of every clime, now presents an area overgrown with rank weeds, decaying hedges, dilapidated

walks, and sickly shrubbery. The hand that once nurtured this pretty scene of buds and blossoms with so much care has passed away. Dull inertness now hangs its lifeless festoons over the whole, from the vaulted hall to the iron railing enclosing the whole.

The day for consummating the nuptial ceremony has arrived; many years have passed since the old mansion witnessed such a scene. The gay, wealthy, and intelligent of the little fashionable world will be here. The spell of loneliness in which the old walls have so long slept will be broken. Sparkling jewels, bland smiles, the rich decorations of former years, are to again enhance the scene. Exhausted nature is to shake off its monotony, to be enlivened with the happiness of a seemingly happy assemblage. A lovely bride is to be showered with smiles, congratulations, tokens of love. Southern gallantry will doff its cares, put on its smiling face. Whatever may smoulder beneath, pleasure and gaiety will adorn the surface.

Franconia sits in her spacious chamber. She is arrayed in flowing *négligé;* a pensive smile invades her countenance; she supports her head on her left hand, the jewels on her tiny fingers sparkling though her hair. Everything round her bears evidence of comfort and luxury; the gentle breeze, as it sweeps through the window to fan her blushing cheek, is impregnated with sweetest odours. She contemplates the meeting of him who is to be the partner of her life; can she reconcile it? Nay, there is something forcing itself against her will. Her bridesmaids,—young, gay, and accomplished,—gather around her. The fierce conflict raging in her bosom discloses itself; the attempt to cheer her up, under the impression that it arises from want of vigour

to buoy up her sensitive system, fails. Again she seems labouring under excitement.

"Franconia!" exclaims one, taking her by the hand, "is not the time approaching?"

"Time always approaches," she speaks: her mind has been wandering, picturing the gloomy spectacle that presents itself in Clotilda's cell. She moves her right hand slowly across her brow, casts an enquiring glance around the room, then at those beside her, and changes her position in the chair. "The time to have your toilet prepared—the servants await you," is the reply. Franconia gathers strength, sits erect in her chair, seems to have just resolved upon something. A servant hastens into her presence bearing a delicately-enveloped note. She breaks the seal, reads it and re-reads it, holds it carelessly in her hand for a minute, then puts it in her bosom. There is something important in the contents, something she must keep secret. It is from Maxwell. Her friend evinced some surprise, while waiting a reply as she read the letter.

"No! not yet," she says, rising from her chair and sallying across the room. "That which is forced upon me —ah! I cannot love him. To me there is no loving wealth. Money may shelter; but it never moves hearts to love truly. How I have struggled against it!" Again she resumes her chair, weeps. Her tears gush from the parent fountain—woman's heart. "My noble uncle in trouble, my dear brother gone; yes! to where, and for what, I dare not think; and yet it has preyed upon me through the struggle of pride against love. My father may soon follow; but I am to be consigned to the arms of one whom it would be folly to say I respect."

Her friend, Miss Alice Latel, reminds her that it were well not to let such melancholy wanderings trouble her. She suggests that the colonel, being rich, will fill the place of father as well as husband; that she will be surrounded by the pleasures which wealth only can bring, and in this world what more can be desired?

"Such fathers seldom make affectionate husbands; nor do I want the father without the husband; his wealth would not make me respect him." Franconia becomes excited, giving rapid utterance to her language. "Can I suppress my melancholy—can I enjoy such pleasure, and my dear Clotilda in a prison, looking through those galling gratings? Can I be happy when the anguish of despair pierces deep into her heart? No! oh, no! Never, while I think of her, can I summon resolution to put on a bridal robe. Nay! I will not put them on without her. I will not dissemble joy while she sinks in her prison solitude!"

"Can you mean that—at this hour?" enquires Miss Alice, looking upon her with anxiety pictured in her face. One gives the other a look of surprise. Miss Alice must needs call older counsel.

"Yes!" replies Franconia, more calm; "even at this hour! It is never too late to serve our sisters. Could I smile—could I seem happy, and so many things to contemplate? We cannot disguise them now; we cannot smother scandal with a silken mantle. Clotilda must be with me. Negro as she is by law, she is no less dear to me. Nor can I yield to those feelings so prominent in southern breasts,—I cannot disclaim her rights, leave her the mere chattel subject of brute force, and then ask forgiveness of heaven!" This delaration, made in a positive tone at

once disclosed her resolution. We need not tell the reader by what surprise it took the household; nor, when she as suddenly went into a violent paroxysm of hysterics, the alarm it spread.

The quiet of the mansion has changed for uproar and confusion. Servants are running here and there, getting in each other's way, blocking the passages, and making the confusion more intense. Colonel M'Carstrow is sent for, reaches the mansion in great consternation, expects to find Franconia a corpse, for the negro messenger told him such a crooked story, and seemed so frightened, that he can't make anything straight of it—except that there is something very alarming.

She has been carried to one of the ante-chambers, reclines on a couch of softest tapestry, a physician at one side, and Alice, bathing her temples with aromatic liquid, on the other. She presents a ravishing picture of delicacy, modesty, and simplicity,—of all that is calmly beautiful in woman. "I can scarcely account for it; but, she's coming to," says the man of medicine, looking on mechanically. Her white bosom swells gently, like a newly-waked zephyr playing among virgin leaves; while her eyes, like melancholy stars, glimmer with the lustre of her soul. "Ah me!" she sighs, raising her hand over her head and resting it upon the cushion, as her auburn hair floats, calm and beautiful, down her pearly shoulder.

The colonel touches her hand; and, as if it had been too rudely, she draws it to her side, then places it upon her bosom. Again raising her eyes till they meet his, she blushes. It is the blush of innocence, that brightens beneath the spirit of calm resolution. She extends her hand again,

slowly, and accepts his. "You will gratify me—will you not?" she mutters, attempting to gain a recumbent position They raise her as she intimates a desire; she seems herself again.

"Whatever your wish may be. You have but to intimate it," replies the colonel, kissing her hand.

"Then, I want Clotilda. Go bring her to me; she only can wait on me; and I am fond of her. With her I shall be well soon; she will dress me. Uncle will be happy, and we shall all be happy."

"But," the colonel interrupts, suddenly, "where is she to be found?"

"In the prison. You'll find her there!" There is little time to lose,—a carriage is ordered, the colonel drives to the prison, and there finds the object of Franconia's trouble. She, the two children at her side, sits in a cell seven by five feet; the strong grasp of slave power fears itself, its tyranny glares forth in the emaciated appearance of its female victim. The cell is lighted through a small aperture in the door, which hangs with heavy bolts and bars, as if torturing the innocent served the power of injustice. The prison-keeper led the way through a narrow passage between stone walls. His tap on the door startles her; she moves from her position, where she had been seated on a coarse blanket. It is all they (the hospitable southern world, with its generous laws) can afford her; she makes it a bed for three. A people less boastful of hospitality may give her more. She holds a prayer-book in her hand, and motions to the children as they crouch at her feet.

"Come, girl! somebody's here to see you," says the keeper, looking in at the aperture, as the sickly stench escapes from the dark cavern-like place.

Nervously, the poor victim approaches, lays her trembling hand on the grating, gives a doubting glance at the stranger, seems surprised, anxious to know the purport of his mission.

"Am I wanted?" she enquires eagerly, as if fearing some rude dealer has come—perhaps to examine her person, that he may be the better able to judge of her market value.

Notwithstanding the coldness of M'Carstrow's nature, his feelings are moved by the womanly appearance of the wench, as he calls her when addressing the warden. There is something in the means by which so fair a creature is reduced to merchandise he cannot altogether reconcile. Were it not for what habit and education can do, it would be repulsive to nature in its crudest state. But it is according to law, and those laws are the great tolerated of a free country.

"I want you to go with me, and you will see your young missis," says M'Carstrow, shrugging his shoulders. He is half inclined to let his better feelings give way to sympathy. But custom and commerce forbid it; they carry off the spoil, just as the sagacious pumpkin philosopher of England admits slavery a great evil, while delivering an essay for the purpose of ridiculing emancipation.

M'Carstrow soon changes his feelings,—addresses himself to business. "Are you in here for sale?" he enquires, attempting to whistle an air, and preserve an unaffected appearance.

The question touches a tender chord of her feelings; her bosom swells with emotions of grief; he has wounded that sensitive chord upon which the knowledge of her degradation

hangs. She draws a handkerchief from her pocket, wipes the tear that glistens in her eye, clasps Annette in her arms —while Nicholas, frightened, hangs by the skirts of her dress,—buries her face in her bosom, retires a few steps, and again seats herself on the blanket.

"The question is pending. If I'm right about it—and I believe I'm generally so on such cases—it comes on before the next session, fall term," says the gaoler, turning to M'Carstrow with a look of wonderful importance. The gaoler, who, with his keys, lets loose the anxieties of men, continues his learned remarks. "Notice has been served how she's free. But that kind a' twisting things to make slave property free never amounts to much, especially when a man gets where they say Marston is! Anthony Romescos has been quizzing about, and it don't take much to make such things property when he's round." The man of keys again looks very wise, runs his hand deep into the pocket of his coat, and says something about this being a great country.

"How much do you reckon her worth, my friend?" enquires M'Carstrow, exchanging a significant glance.

"Well, now you've got me. It's a point of judgment, you see. The article's rather questionable—been spoiled. There's a doubt about such property when you put it up, except a gentleman wants it; and then, I reckon, it'll bring a smart price. There's this to be considered, I reckon, though they haven't set a price on her yet, she's right 'cinating good looks; and the young 'uns a perfect cherry. It'll bring a big heap one of these days."

"We won't mind that, just now, gaoler," M'Carstrow says, very complacently; "you'll let me have her to-night, and I'll return her safe in the morning."

"No, no," interposes Clotilda, mistaking M'Carstrow's object. She crouches down on the blanket, as if shrinking from a deadly assault: "let me remain, even in my cell." She draws the children to her side.

"Don't mistake me, my girl: I am a friend. I want you for Franconia Rovero. She is fond of you, you know."

"Franconia!" she exclaims with joy, starting to her feet at the sound of the name. "I do know her, dear Franconia! I know her, I love her, she loves me—I wish she was my mother. But she is to be the angel of my freedom——" Here she suddenly stopped, as if she had betrayed something.

"We must lose no time," M'Carstrow says, informing her that Franconia is that night to be his bride, and cannot be happy without seeing her.

"Bride! and cannot prepare without me," mutters the woman, seeming to doubt the reality of his statement. A thought flashes in her mind: "Franconia has not forgotten me; I will go and be Franconia's friend." And with a child-like simplicity she takes Annette by the hand, as if they were inseparable. "Can't Nicholas go, too?" she inquires.

"You must leave the child," is the cool reply. M'Carstrow attempts to draw the heavy bolt that fastens the door.

"Not so fast, if you please," the warden speaks. "I cannot permit her to leave without an order from the sheriff." He puts his hand against the door.

"She will surely be returned in the morning. I'm good for a hundred such pieces of property."

"Can't help that," interrupts the gaoler, coolly.

"But, there's my honour!"

"An article gaolers better not deal in. It may be very good commodity in some kinds of business: don't pay in ours; and then, when this kind of property is in question, it won't do to show a favour beyond the rule."

M'Carstrow is in a sad dilemma. He must relieve himself through a problem of law, which, at this late hour, brings matters to a singular point. He believes Franconia suffers from a nervous affection, as the doctors call it, and has fixed her mind upon the only object of relief. He had made no preparation for such a critical event; but there is no postponing the ceremony,—no depriving her of the indulgence. Not a moment is to be lost: he sets off, post-haste, for the sheriff's office. That functionary is well known for his crude method of executing business; to ask a favour of him would be like asking the sea to give up its dead. He is cold, methodical, unmoveable; very much opposed to anything having the appearance of an innovation upon his square rules of business.

M'Carstrow finds him in just the mood to interpose all the frigid peculiarities of his incomprehensible nature. The colonel has known him by reputation; he knows him now through a different medium. After listening to M'Carstrow's request, and comporting himself with all imaginable dignity, he runs his fingers through his hair, looks at M'Carstrow vacantly, and well nigh rouses his temper. M'Carstrow feels, as southern gentlemen are wont to feel, that his position and title are enough to ensure courtesy and a quick response. The man of writs and summonses feels quite sure that the pomp of his office is sufficient to offset all other distinctions.

"Whar' d'ye say the gal was,—in my gaol?" the sheriff inquires, with solemn earnestness, and drawling his words measuredly, as if the whole affair was quite within his line of business. The sheriff has the opportunity of making a nice little thing of it; the *object* to be released will serve the profits of the profession. "Gittin' that gal out yander ain't an easy thing now, 'tant! It'll cost ye 'bout twenty dollars, sartin," he adds, turning over the leaves of his big book, and running his finger down a scale of names.

"I don't care if it costs a hundred! Give me an order for her release!" M'Carstrow begins to understand Mr. Sheriff's composition, and putting his hand into his pocket, draws forth a dwenty-dollar gold piece, throws it upon the table. The effect is electric: it smooths down the surface of Mr. Sheriff's nature,—brings out the disposition to accommodate. The Sheriff's politeness now taxes M'Carstrow's power to reciprocate.

"Now, ye see, my friend," says Mr. Sheriff, in a quaint tone, "there's three *fi fas* on that critter. Hold a minute!" He must needs take a better glance; he runs his fingers over the page again, mutters to himself, and then breaks out into a half-musical, half-undefinable humming. "It's a snarled-up affair, the whole on't. T'll take a plaguy cunnin' lawyer to take the shine out." The sheriff pushes the piece of coin nearer the inkstand, into the centre of the table. "I feel all over like accommodatin' ye," he deigns to say; "but then t'll be so pested crooked gettin' the thing straight." He hesitates before the wonderful difficulty,—he can't see his way straight through it. "Three *fi fas*! I believe I'm correct; there's one principal one, however."

"I pledge my honour for her return in the morning; and she shall be all shined up with a new dress. Her presence is imperatively necessary to-night," M'Carstrow remarks, becoming impatient.

"Two *fi fas*!—well, the first look looked like three. But, the principal one out of the way,—no matter." Mr. Sheriff becomes more and more enlightened on the unenlightened difficulties of the law. He remarks, touching M'Carstrow on the arm, with great seriousness of countenance, "I sees how the knot's tied. Ye know, my functions are turned t' most everything; and it makes a body see through a thing just as straight as ——. Pest on't! Ye see, it's mighty likely property,—don't strike such every day. That gal 'll bring a big tick in the market——"

"Excuse me, my dear sir," M'Carstrow suddenly interrupts. "Understand me, if you please. I want her for nothing that you contemplate,—nothing, I pledge you my honour as a southern gentleman!"

"Ah,—bless me! Well, but there's nothin' in that. I see! I see! I see!" Mr. Sheriff brightens up, his very soul seems to expand with legal tenacity. "Well, ye see, there's a question of property raised about the gal, and her young 'un, too—nice young 'un 'tis; but it's mighty easy tellin' whose it is. About the law matter, though, you must get the consent of all the plaintiff's attorneys,—that's no small job. Lawyers are devilish slippery, rough a feller amazingly, once in a while; chance if ye don't have to get the critter valued by a survey. Graspum, though's al'as on hand, is first best good at that: can say her top price while ye'd say seven," says Mr. Sheriff, maintaining his wise dignity, as he reminds M'Carstrow that his name is

Cur, commonly called Mr. Cur, sheriff of the county. It must not be inferred that Mr. Cur has any of the canine qualities about him. The hour for the ceremony is close at hand. M'Carstrow, satisfied that rules of law are very arbitrary things in the hands of officials—that such property is difficult to get out of the meshes of legal technicality—that honour is neither marketable or pledgeable in such cases, must move quickly: he seeks the very conscientious attorneys, gets them together, pleads the necessity of the case: a convention is arranged, Graspum will value the property (as a weigher and gauger of human flesh). This done, M'Carstrow signs a bond in the sum of fifteen hundred dollars, making himself responsible for the property. The instrument contains a provision, that should any unforeseen disaster befall it, the question of property will remain subject to the decision of Court. Upon these conditions, M'Carstrow procures an order for her release. He is careful, however, that nothing herein set forth shall affect the suit already instituted.

Love is an exhilarating medicine, moving and quickening the hearts of old and young. M'Carstrow felt its influence sensibly, as he hurried back to the prison (excited by the near approach of the ceremony), with the all-important order. Bolts, bars, and malarious walls, yield to it the pining captive whose presence will soothe Franconia's feelings.

Clotilda was no less elated at the hope of changing her prison for the presence of her young mistress; and yet, the previous summons had nearly unnerved her. She lingers at the grating, waiting M'Carstrow's return. Time seems to linger, until her feelings are nearly overwhelmed in

suspense. Again, there is a mystery in the mission of the stranger; she almost doubts his sincerity. It may be one of those plots, so often laid by slave-traders, to separate her from her child,—perhaps to run her where all hope of regaining freedom will be for ever lost. One after another did these things recur to her mind, only to make the burden of her troubles more painful.

Her child has eaten its crust, fallen into a deep sleep, and, its little hands resting clasped on its bosom, lies calmly upon the coarse blanket. She gazes upon it, as a mother only can gaze. There is beauty in that sweet face; it is not valued for its loveliness, its tenderness, its purity. How cursed that it is to be the prime object of her disgrace! Thus contemplating, M'Carstrow appears at the outer gate, is admitted into the prison, reaches the inner grating, is received by the warden, who smiles generously. "I'm as glad as anything! Hope you had a good time with his honour, Mr. Cur?" he says, holding the big key in his hand, and leading the way into the office. He takes his seat at a table, commences preparing the big book. "Here is the entry," he says, with a smile of satisfaction. "We'll soon straighten the thing now." Puts out his hand for the order which M'Carstrow has been holding. "That's just the little thing," he says, reading it word by word carefully, and concluding with the remark that he has had a deal of trouble with it. M'Carstrow places some pieces of silver in his hand; they turn the man of keys into a subservient creature. He hastens to the cell, M'Carstrow following, —draws the heavy bolts,—bids the prisoner come forth. "Yes, come, girl; I've had a tough time to get you out of that place: it holds its prey like lawyers' seals," rejoins M'Carstrow.

"Not without my child?" she inquires quickly. She stoops down and kisses it. "My daughter,—my sweet child!" she mutters.

"Till to-morrow. You must leave her for to-night."

"If I must!" Again she kisses the child, adding, as she smoothed her hand over Annette's, and parted her hair, "Mother will return soon." There was something so touching in the word mother, spoken while leaning over a sleeping babe. Clotilda reaches the door, having kept her eyes upon the child as she left her behind. A tremor comes over her,—she reluctantly passes the threshold of the narrow arch; but she breathes the fresh air of heaven,—feels as if her life had been renewed. A mother's thoughts, a mother's anxieties, a mother's love, veil her countenance. She turns to take a last look as the cold door closes upon the dearest object of her life. How it grates upon its hinges! her hopes seem for ever extinguished.

The law is thus far satisfied—the legal gentlemen are satisfied, the warden is not the least generous; and Mr. Cur feels that, while the job was a very nice one, he has not transcended one jot of his importance. Such is highly gratifying to all parties. Clotilda is hurried into a carriage, driven at a rapid rate, and soon arrives at the mansion. Here she is ushered into a chamber, arrayed in a new dress, and conducted into the presence of Franconia. The meeting may be more easily imagined than described. Their congratulations were warm, affectionate, touching. Clotilda kisses Franconia's hand again and again; Franconia, in turn, lays her hand upon Clotilda's shoulder, and, with a look of commiseration, sets her eyes intently upon her, as if she detects in her countenance those features she cannot disown. She

requests to be left alone with Clotilda for a short time. Her friends withdraw. She discloses the difficulties into which the family have suddenly fallen, the plan of escape she has arranged, the hopes she entertains of her regaining her freedom. "Public opinion and the state of our difficulties prompted this course,—I prefer it to any other: follow my directions,—Maxwell has everything prepared, and to-night will carry you off upon the broad blue ocean of liberty. Enjoy that liberty, Clotilda,—be a woman,—follow the path God has strewn for your happiness; above all, let freedom be rewarded with your virtue, your example," says Franconia, as she again places her arm round Clotilda's neck.

"And leave my child, Franconia?" the other inquires, looking up imploringly in Franconia's face.

"To me," is the quick response. "I will be her guardian, her mother. Get you beyond the grasp of slavery—get beyond its contaminating breath, and I will be Annette's mother. When you are safely there, when you can breathe the free air of liberty, write me, and she shall meet you. Leave her to me; think of her only in my care, and in my trust she will be happy. Meet Maxwell—he is your friend—at the centre corridor; he will be there as soon as the ceremony commences; he will have a pass from me; he will be your guide!" She overcomes Clotilda's doubts, reasons away her pleadings for her child, gives her a letter and small miniature (they are to be kept until she reaches her destination of freedom), and commences preparing for the ceremony.

Night arrives, the old mansion brightens and resounds with the bustle of preparation. Servants are moving about in great confusion. Everything is in full dress; "yellow

fellows," immersed in trim black coats, nicely-cut pantaloons, white vests and gloves, shirt-collars of extraordinary dimensions, and hair curiously crimped, are standing at their places along the halls, ready for reception. Another class, equally well dressed, are running to and fro through the corridors in the despatch of business. Old mammas have a new shine on their faces, their best "go to church" fixings on their backs. Younger members of the same property species are gaudily attired—some in silk, some in missus's slightly worn cashmere. The colour of their faces grades from the purest ebony to the palest olive. A fantastic philosophy may be drawn from the mixture: it contrasts strangely with the flash and dazzle of their fantastic dresses, their large circular ear-rings, their curiously-tied bandanas, the large bow points of which lay crossed on the tufts of their crimpy hair. The whole scene has an air of bewitching strangeness. In another part of the mansion we find the small figures of the estate, all agog, toddling and doddling, with faces polished like black-balled shoes; they are as piquantand interesting as their own admiration of the dress master has provided them for the occasion.

The darkness increases as the night advances. The arbour leading from the great gate to the vaulted hall in the base of the mansion is hung with lanterns of grotesque patterns, emitting light and shade as variegated as the hues of the rainbow. The trees and shrubbery in the arena, hung with fantastic lanterns, enliven the picture—make it grand and imposing. It presents a fairy-like perspective, with spectre lights hung here and there, their mellow glows reflecting softly upon the luxuriant foliage.

Entering the vaulted hall, its floor of antique tiles;

frescoed walls with well-executed mythological designs, jetting lights flickering and dazzling through its arches, we find ourselves amidst splendour unsurpassed in our land. At the termination of the great hall a massive flight of spiral steps, of Egyptian marble, ascends to the fourth story, forming a balcony at each, where ottomans are placed, and from which a fine view of the curvature presents itself, from whence those who have ascended may descry those ascending. On the second story is a corridor, with moulded juttings and fretwork overhead; these are hung with festoons of jasmines and other delicate flowers, extending its whole length, and lighted by globular lamps, the prismatic ornaments of which shed their soft glows on the fixtures beneath. They invest it with the appearance of a bower decorated with buds and blossoms. From this, on the right, a spacious arched door, surmounted by a semi-circle of stained glass containing devices of the Muses and other allegorical figures, leads into an immense parlour, having a centre arch hung with heavy folds of maroon-coloured velvet overspread with lace. Look where you will, the picture of former wealth and taste presents itself. Around the walls hang costly paintings, by celebrated Italian masters; some are portraits of the sovereigns of England, from that of Elizabeth to George the Third. Brilliant lights jet forth from massive chandeliers and girandoles, lighting up the long line of chaste furniture beneath. The floor is spread with softest Turkey carpet; groups of figures in marble, skilfully executed, form a curiously arranged fire-place; Britannia's crest surmounting the whole. At each end of the room stand chastely designed pieces of statuary of heroes and heroines of past ages. Lounges, ottomans, reclines, and couches, elaborately carved and

upholstered, stand here and there in all their antiqueness and grandeur. Pier-glasses, massive tables inlaid with mosaic and pearl, are arranged along the sides, and overhung with flowing tapestry that falls carelessly from the large Doric windows. Over these windows are massive cornices, richly designed and gilded. Quiet grandeur pervades the whole; even the fairy-like dais that has been raised for the nuptial ceremony rests upon four pieces of statuary, and is covered with crimson velvet set with sparkling crystals. And while this spectacle presents but the vanity of our nature, grand but not lasting, the sweet breath of summer is wafting its balmy odours to refresh and give life to its lifeless luxury.

The gay *cortège* begins to assemble; the halls fill with guests; the beauty, grace, and intelligence of this little fashionable world, arrayed in its very best, will be here with its best face. Sparkling diamonds and other precious stones, dazzling, will enhance the gorgeous display. And yet, how much of folly's littleness does it all present! All this costly drapery—all this show of worldly voluptuousness—all this tempest of gaiety, is but the product of pain and sorrow. The cheek that blushes in the gay circle, that fair form born to revel in luxury, would not blush nor shrink to see a naked wretch driven with the lash. Yea! we have said it was the product of pain and sorrow; it is the force of oppression wringing from ignorance and degradation the very dregs of its life. Men say, what of that?—do we not live in a great good land of liberty?

The young affianced,—dressed in a flowing skirt of white satin, with richly embroidered train; a neat bodice of the same material, with incisions of lace tipped with brilliants;

sleeves tapering into neat rufflets of lace clasped upon the wrist with diamond bracelets, a stomacher of chastely worked lace with brilliants in the centre, relieved by two rows of small unpolished pearls,—is ushered into the parlour, followed by groomsmen and bridesmaids as chastely dressed.

There is a striking contrast between the youth and delicacy of Franconia, blushing modestly, andin her calmness suppressing that inert repugnance working in her mind, and the brusqueness of Mr. Carstrow, who assumes the free and easy dash, hoping thereby to lessen his years in the picture of himself. Clotilda, for the last time, has arranged Franconia's hair, which lies in simple braids across her polished brows, and folds upon the back, where it is secured and set off with a garland of wild flowers. The hand that laid it there, that arranged it so neatly, will never arrange it again. As a last token of affection for her young mistress, Clotilda has plucked a new-blown chiponique, white with crystal dew, and surrounded it with tiny buds and orange blossoms: this, Franconia holds in her left hand, the lace to which it is attached falling like mist to the ground.

Thus arrayed, they appear at the altar: the good man of modest cloth takes his place; the ceremony commences; and as it proceeds, and the solemn words fall upon her ear, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," she raises her eyes upwards, with a look of melancholy, as tears, like pearls, glisten in her soft expressive eyes. Her heart is moved with deeper emotion than this display of southern galaxy can produce. The combination of circumstances that has brought her to the altar, the decline of fortune, perhaps disgrace, worked upon her mind. It is that which has consigned her to the arms of one she

cannot love, whose feelings and associations she never can respect. Was she to be the ransom?—was she to atone for the loss of family fortune, family pride, family inconsistency? kept forcing itself upon her. There was no gladness in it—no happiness. And there was the captive, the victim of foul slavery—so foul that hell yearns for its abettors—whose deliverance she prayed for with her earnest soul. She knew the oppressor's grasp—she had, with womanly pride, come forward to relieve the wronged, and she had become sensible of the ties binding her to Clotilda. Unlike too many of her sex, she did not suppress her natural affections; she could not see only the slave in a disowned sister; she acknowledged the relationship, and hastened to free her, to send her beyond slavery's grasp, into the free embrace of freedom.

The ceremony ends; the smiles and congratulations of friends, as they gather round Franconia, shower upon her; she receives them coldly, her heart has no love for them, it throbs with anxiety for that slave whose liberty she has planned, and for whose safety she invokes the all-protecting hand of heaven.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANOTHER PHASE OF THE PICTURE.

While the ceremony we have described in the foregoing chapter was proceeding, Clotilda, yielding to the earnest request of Franconia, dresses herself in garments she has provided, and awaits the commencement of the scene. A little schooner from one of the Bahama Islands lies moored in the harbour awaiting a fair wind to return.

We need scarcely tell the reader that a plan of escape had been previously arranged between Franconia and Maxwell; but why she took so earnest a part in carrying it out, we must reserve for another chapter.

Maxwell had sought the captain of this schooner, found him of a generous disposition, ready to act in behalf of freedom. Having soon gained his confidence, and enlisted his good services, it took no great amount of persuasion to do this, his feelings having already been aroused against slavery, the giant arms of which, stretched out between fear and injustice, had interfered with his rights. He had seen it grasp the bones and sinews of those who were born in freedom—he had seen men laugh at his appeals for justice—he had seen one of his free-born British seamen manacled and dragged to prison at noonday, merely because his skin was slightly coloured; he had been compelled to pay tribute to

keep alive the oppressor's power, to compensate the villainy rogues practise upon honest men.

"Yes!" says the captain, a sturdy son of the sea, in answer to Maxwell; "bring her on board; and with a heart's best wishes, if I don't land her free and safe in Old Bahama I'll never cross the *gulf stream* again." And the mode of getting the boats ready was at once arranged.

The night was still and dark; picturesque illuminations in and around the mansion glittered in contrast with the starry arch of heaven; the soft south breeze fans to life the dark foliage that clusters around—nature has clothed the scene with her beauties. Clotilda—she has eagerly awaited the coming time—descends to the balustrade in the rear of the mansion. Here she meets a band of musicians; they have assembled to serenade, and wait the benediction, a signal for which will be made from one of the balconies. She fears they may recognise her, hesitates at the entrance, paces backward and forward in the colonnade, and professes to be awaiting some message from her mistress. Again scanning the sçene, she watches intently, keeping her eyes fixed in the direction Franconia has suggested. "I was to meet Maxwell there!" works upon her mind until she becomes nervous and agitated. "I was, and must meet him there;" and she walks slowly back to the entrance, turns and returns, watches until her soul has nearly sickened, at length espies the joyous signal. Franconia did not deceive her. Oh, no! he stands there in the glare of a lamp that hangs from a willow-tree. She vaults over the path, grasps his hand with a sister's affection, and simultaneously the soft swelling music of "Still so gently o'er me stealing!" floats in the air, as dulcet and soul-stirring as ever touched the fancy, or clothed with holy

inspiration the still repose of a southern landscape at midnight. But she is with Maxwell; they have passed the serenaders,—liberty is the haven of her joy, it gives her new hopes of the future. Those hopes dispel the regrets that hover over her mind as she thinks of her child.

For several minutes they stand together, listening to the music, and watching the familiar faces of old friends as they come upon the balcony in the second story. Southern life had its pleasant associations—none would attempt to deny them; but the evil brooded in the uncertainty that hung over the fate of millions, now yielding indulgence to make life pleasant, then sinking them for ever in the cruelties of a tyrant's power. It is the crushing out of the mind's force,—the subduing the mental and physical man to make the chattel complete,—the shutting out of all the succinct virtues that nurture freedom, that incite us to improve the endowments of nature, that proves the rankling poison. And this poison spreads its baneful influence in and around good men's better desires.

After watching in silence for a few moments, Clotilda gives vent to her feelings. "I should like to see old Daddy Bob once more, I should! And my poor Annette; she is celled to be sold, I'm afraid; but I must yield to the kindness of Franconia. I have seen some good times among the old folks on the plantation. And there's Aunt Rachel,—a good creature after all,—and Harry. Well; I mustn't think of these things; freedom is sweetest," she says. Maxwell suggests that they move onward. The music dies away in the stillness, as they turn from the scene to flee beyond the grasp of men who traffic in human things called property,—not by a great constitution, but under a constitution's free-

dom giving power. Would that a great and glorious nation had not sold its freedom to the damning stain of avarice! would that it had not perverted that holy word, for the blessings of which generations have struggled in vain! would that it had not substituted a freedom that mystifies a jurisprudence,—that brings forth the strangest fruit of human passions,—that makes prison walls and dreary cells death-beds of the innocent;—that permits human beings to be born for the market, and judged by the ripest wisdom! "Has God ordained such freedom lasting?" will force itself upon us.—We must return to our humble adventurers.

The fugitives reached the back gate, leading into a narrow lane, from whence they cross into the main street. Clotilda has none of the African about her; the most observing guardsman would not stop her for a slave. They pass along unmolested; the guardsmen, some mounted and some walking at a slow pace, bow politely. No one demands a pass. They arrive in safety at a point about two miles from the city, where the captain and his boat await them. No time is lost in embarking: the little bark rides at anchor in the stream; the boat quietly glides to her; they are safely on board. A few minutes more, and the little craft moves seaward under the pressure of a gentle breeze. There is no tragic pursuit of slave-hunters, no tramp of horses to terrify the bleeding victim, no howlings of ravenous blood-hounds,—nothing that would seem to make the issue freedom or death. No! all is as still as a midsummer night in the same clime. The woman—this daughter of slavery's vices—cherishes a love for freedom; the hope of gaining it, and improving those endowments nature has bestowed upon her, freshens her spirits and gives her life to look

forward without desponding. Maxwell is her friend; he has witnessed the blighting power of slavery (not alone in its workings upon the black man, but upon the lineal offspring of freemen), and has resolved to work against its mighty arm. With him it is the spontaneous action of a generous heart sympathising for the wrongs inflicted upon the weak, and loving to see right respected.

The fair Franconia, who has just been forced to accept the hand of a mere charlatan, disclosed the secrets of her mind to him; it was she who incited him to an act which might have sacrificed his freedom, perhaps his life. But mankind is possessed of an innate feeling to do good; and there is a charm added when the object to be served is a fair creature about to be dragged into the miseries of slavery. Even the rougher of our kind cannot resist it; and at times (we except the servile opinion which slavery inflicts upon a people through its profitable issues) prompts the ruffian to generous acts.

The little bark, bound for the haven of freedom, sailed onward over the blue waters, and when daylight dawned had crossed the bar separating the harbour from the ocean. Clotilda ascends to the deck, sits on the companion-seat, and in a pensive mood watches the fading hills where slavery stains the fair name of freedom,—where oppression rears its dark monuments to for ever torture and disgrace a harmless race. She looks intently upon them, as one by one they fade in the obscure horizon, seeming to recall the many associations, pleasant and painful, through which she has passed. She turns from the contemplation to the deep blue sea, and the unclouded arch of heaven, as they spread out before her: they are God's own, man cannot pollute

them; they are like a picture of glory inspiring her with emotions she cannot suppress. As the last dim sight of land is lost in the distance, she waves a handkerchief, as if to bid it adieu for ever; then looking at Maxwell, who sits by her side, she says, with a sigh, "I am beyond it! Free, —yes, free! But, have I not left a sufferer behind? There is my poor Annette, my child; I will clasp her to my bosom, —I will love her more when I meet her again. Good-bye, Franconia—dear Franconia! She will be a mother to my little one; she will keep her word." Thus saying, she casts a look upward, invokes heaven to be merciful to her persecutors,—to protect her child,—to guard Franconia through life. Tears stream down her cheeks as she waves her hand and retires to the cabin.

CHAPTER XVII.

PLEASANT DEALINGS WITH HUMAN PROPERTY.

We must deal gently with our scenes; we must describe them without exaggeration, and in rotation. While the scenes we have just described were proceeding, another, of deeper import, and more expressive of slavery's complicated combinations, was being enacted in another part of the city.

A raffle of ordinary character had been announced in the morning papers,—we say ordinary, because it came within the ordinary specification of trade, and violated neither statute law nor municipal ordinance,—and the raffler, esteemed a great character in the city, was no less celebrated for his taste in catering for the amusement of his patrons. On this occasion, purporting to be a very great one, the inducements held out were no less an incentive of gambling propensities than an aim to serve licentious purposes. In a word, it offered "all young connoisseurs of beauty a chance to procure one of the finest-developed young wenches,—fair, bright, perfectly brought up, young, chaste, and of most amiable disposition, for a trifling sum." This was all straight in the way of trade, in a free country; nobody should blush at it (some maidens, reading the notice, might feel modestly inclined to), because nobody could gainsay it. This is prize No. 1, prime (as set down in the schedule), and the amount per toss being only a trifle, persons in

want of such prizes are respectfully informed of the fact that only a few chances remain, which will command a premium before candle-light. Prize No. 2 is a superior pony, of well-known breed (here the pedigree is set forth; which advantage had not been accorded to the human animal, lest certain members of the same stock should blush), raised with great care and attention, and exactly suited for a gentleman's jant or a lady's saddle-nag. Prize No. 3 is a superior setter dog, who has also been well brought up, is from good stock, is kind to children, who play with him when they please. He knows niggers, is good to watch them, has been known to catch runaways, to tear their shins wonderfully. Indeed, according to the setting forth of the sagacious animal, he would seem to understand slave-law quite well, and to be ready and willing to lend his aid with dogs of a different species to enforce its provisions. The only fault the brute has, if fault it may be called, is that he does not understand the constitutionality of the fugitive slave law,—a law destined to be exceedingly troublesome among a free people. Did the sagacity of the animal thus extend to the sovereign law of the land of the brave and free, he would bring a large price at the north, where men are made to do what dogs most delight in at the south.

The first prize, as set forth, is valued at seven hundred dollars: the magnanimous gentleman who caters thus generously for his patrons states the delicate prize to be worth fifty or a hundred dollars more, and will, with a little more developing, be worth a great deal more money. Hence, he hopes his patrons will duly appreciate enterprising liberality.

The second prize he considers generously low at two hundred dollars; and the dog (the sagacious animal con-

stituting the third prize) would be a great bargain to anybody wanting such an animal, especially in consideration of his propensity to catch negroes, at sixty dollars. The trio of human and animal prizes produce no distinctive effect upon the feelings of those who speculate in such property; with them it is only a matter of gradation between dollars and cents.

But, to be more off-handed in this generous undertaking, and in consideration of the deep-felt sensibility and hospitality which must always protect southern character, the chances will be restricted to two hundred, at five dollars per chance. Money must be paid in before friends can consider themselves stock-holders. It is to be a happy time, in a happy country, where all are boasted happy. The first lucky dog will get the human prize; the next lucky dog will get the pony; the third will make a dog of himself by only winning a dog. The fun of the thing, however, will be the great attraction; men of steady habits are reminded of this. Older gentlemen, having very nice taste for colour, but no particular scruples about religion, and who seldom think morals worth much to niggers, "because they aint got sense to appreciate such things," are expected to be on hand. Those who know bright and fair niggers were never made for anything under the sun but to gratify their own desires, are expected to spread the good news, to set the young aristocracy of the city all agog,—to start up a first-best crowd,—have some tall drinking and first-rate amusement. Everybody is expected to tell his friend, and his friend is expected to help the generous man out with his generous scheme, and all are expected to join in the "*bender*." Nobody must forget that the whole thing is to

come off at " Your House,"—an eating and drinking saloon, of great capacity, kept by the very distinguished man, Mr. O'Brodereque.

Mr. O'Brodereque, who always pledges his word upon the honour of a southern gentleman (frequently asserting his greatness in the political world, and wondering who could account for his not finding his way into Congress, where talent like his would be brought out for the protection of our south), has made no end of money by selling a monstrous deal of very bad liquor to customers of all grades,—niggers excepted. And, although his hair is well mixed with the grey of many years, he declares the guilt of selling liquor to niggers is not on his shoulders. It is owing to this clean state of his character, that he has been able to maintain his aristocratic position. "Yes, indeed," said one of his patrons, who, having fallen in arrears, found himself undergoing the very disagreeable process of being politely kicked into the street, " money makes a man big in the south: big in niggers, big in politics, big with everything but the way I'm big,—with an empty pocket. I don't care, though; he's going up by the process that I'm coming down. There's philosophy in that." It could not be denied that Mr. O'Brodereque (commonly called General O'Brodereque) was very much looked up to by great people and Bacchanalians,—men who pay court to appease the wondrous discontent of the belly, to the total neglect of the back. Not a few swore, by all their importance, a greater man never lived. He is, indeed, all that can be desired to please the simple pretensions of a free-thinking and free-acting southern people, who, having elevated him to the office of alderman, declare him exactly the man to

develope its functions. A few of the old school aristocracy, who still retain the bad left them by their English ancestry, having long since forgotten the good, do sneer now and then at Mr. Brodereque's pretensions. But, like all great men who have a great object to carry out, he affects to frown such things down,—to remind the perpetrators of such aristocratic sneers what a spare few they are. He asserts, and with more truth than poetry, that any gentleman having the capacity to deluge the old aristocracy with doubtful wine, line his pockets while draining theirs (all the time making them feel satisfied he imports the choicest), and who can keep on a cheerful face the while, can fill an alderman's chair to a nicety.

In addition to the above, Mr. O'Brodereque is one of those very accommodating individuals who never fail to please their customers, while inciting their vanity; and, at the same time, always secure a good opinion for themselves. And, too, he was liberally inclined, never refused tick, but always made it tell; by which well-devised process, his patrons were continually becoming his humble servants, ready to serve him at call.

Always civil, and even obsequious at first, ready to condescend and accommodate, he is equally prompt when matters require that peculiar turn which southerners frequently find themselves turned into,—no more tick and a turn out of doors. At times, Mr. O'Brodereque's customers have the very unenviable consolation of knowing that a small document called a mortgage of their real and personal property remains in his hands, which he will very soon find it necessary to foreclose.

It is dark,—night has stolen upon us again,—the hour

for the raffle is at hand. The saloon, about a hundred and forty feet long by forty wide, is brilliantly lighted for the occasion. The gas-lights throw strange shadows upon the distemper painting with which the walls are decorated. Hanging carelessly here and there are badly-daubed paintings of battle scenes and heroic devices, alternated with lithographic and badly-executed engravings of lustfully-exposed females. Soon the saloon fills with a throng of variously-mixed gentlemen. The gay, the grave, the old, and the young men of the fashionable world, are present. Some affect the fast young man; others seem mere speculators, attracted to the place for the purpose of enjoying an hour, seeing the sight, and, it may be, taking a throw for the "gal." The crowd presents a singular contrast of beings. Some are dressed to the very extreme of fantastic fashion, and would seem to have wasted their brains in devising colours for their backs; others, aspiring to the seriously genteel, are fashioned in very extravagant broadcloth; while a third group is dressed in most niggardly attire, which sets very loosely. In addition to this they wear very large black, white, and grey-coloured felt hats, slouched over their heads; while their nether garments, of red and brown linsey-woolsey, fit like Falstaff's doublet on a whip stock. They seem proud of the grim tufts of hair that, like the moss-grown clumps upon an old oak, spread over their faces; and they move about in the grotesque crowd, making their physiognomies increase its piquancy.

The saloon is one of those places at the south where great men, small men, men of different spheres and occupations, men in prominently defined positions, men in doubtful calls of life, and men most disreputably employed, most do

congregate. At one end of the saloon is a large oyster counter, behind which stand two coloured men, with sauces, savories, and other mixtures at hand, ready to serve customers who prefer the delicacy in its raw state. Men are partaking without noting numbers. Mr. O'Brodereque has boys serving who take very good care of the numbers. Extending along one side of the saloon is an elaborately carved mahogany counter, with panels of French white and gilt mouldings. This is surmounted with a marble slab, upon which stand well-filled decanters, vases, and salvers. Behind this counter, genteelly-dressed and polite attendants are serving customers who stand along its side in a line, *treating* in true southern style. The calling for drinks is a problem for nice ears to solve, so varied are the sounds, so strange the names: style, quantity, and mixture seemed without limit, set on in various colours to flow and flood the spirits of the jovial. On the opposite side of the saloon are rows of seats and arm-chairs, interspersed with small tables, from which the beverage can be imbibed more at ease. On the second story is the great "eating saloon," with its various apartments, its curtained boxes, its prim-looking waiters, its pier-glass walls. There is every accommodation for belly theologians, who may discuss the choicest viands of the season.

The company are assembled,—the lower saloon is crowded; Mr. O'Brodereque, with great dignity, mounts the stand,—a little table standing at one end of the room. His face reddens, he gives several delinquent coughs, looks round smilingly upon his motley patrons, points his finger recognisingly at a wag in the corner, who has addressed some remarks to him, puts his thumbs in the sleeve-holes of his

vest, throws back his coat-collar, puts himself in a defiant attitude, and is ready to deliver himself of his speech.

"A political speech from the General! Gentlemen, hats off, and give your attention to Mr. General O'Brodereque's remarks!" resounds from several voices. Mr. O'Brodereque is somewhat overcome, his friends compliment him so: he stands, hesitating, as if he had lost the opening part of his speech, like a statue on a molasses-cask. At length he speaks. "If it was a great political question, gentlemen, I'd get the twist of the thing,—I'd pitch into it, big! These little things always trouble public men more than the important intricacies of government do. You see, they are not comesurate,—that's it!" says Mr. Brodereque, looking wondrously wise the while. After bowing, smiling, and acknowledging the compliments of his generous customers with prodigious grace, he merely announces to his friends —with eloquence that defies imitation, and turns rhetoric into a discordant exposition of his own important self—that, not having examined the constitution for more nor three Sundays, they must, upon the honour of a gentleman, excuse his political speech. "But, gents," he says, "you all know how I trys to please ye in the way of raffles and such things, and how I throws in the belly and stomach fixins. Now, brighten up, ye men of taste (Mr. Brodereque laughs satisfactorily as he surveys his crowd), I'm going to do the thing up brown for ye,—to give ye a chance for a bit of bright property what ye don't get every day; can't scare up such property only once in a while. It'll make ye old fellers wink, some (Mr. O'Brodereque winks at several aged gentlemen, whose grey hair is figurative in the crowd) think about being young again. And, my friends

below thirty—my young friends—ah, ye rascals! I thought I'd play the tune on the right string!" (he laughs, and puts his finger to his mouth quisically), "I likes to suit ye, and please ye: own her up, now,—don't I?"

"Hurrah! for Brod,—Brod's a trump!" again resounds from a dozen voices.

They all agree to the remark that nobody can touch the great Mr. O'Brodereque in getting up a nice bit of fun, amusing young men with more money than mind, and being in the favour of aristocratic gentlemen who think nothing of staking a couple of prime niggers on a point of *faro*.

Mr. O'Brodereque has been interrupted; he begs his friends will, for a moment, cease their compliments and allow him to proceed. "Gentlemen!" he continues, "the gal's what ye don't get every day; and she's as choice as she's young; and she's as handsome as she's young; and for this delicious young crittur throws are only five dollars a piece." The sentimental southern gentleman has no reference to the throes of anguish that are piercing the wounded soul of the woman.

"A gentleman what ain't got a V* in his pocket better not show his winkers in this crowd. After that, gentlemen, there's a slap-up pony, and one of the knowinest dogs outside of a court-house. Now,—gents! if this ain't some tall doings,—some of a raffle, just take my boots and I'll put it for Texas. A chance for a nigger gal—a pony—a dog; who on 'arth wants more, gentlemen?" Mr. O'Brodereque again throws back his coat, shrugs his shoulders, wipes the perspiration from his brow,

* Five-dollar bill.

and is about to descend from the table. No, he won't come down just yet. He has struck a vein; his friends are getting up a favourable excitement.

"Bravo! bravo!—long may General Brodereque keep the hospitable Your House! Who wouldn't give a vote for Brodereque at the next election?" re-echoes through the room.

"One more remark, gentlemen." Mr. Brodereque again wipes the perspiration from his forehead, and orders a glass of water, to loosen his oratorical organs. He drinks the water, seems to increase in his own greatness; his red face glows redder, he makes a theatrical gesticulation with his right hand, crumples his hair into curious points, and proceeds:—"The lucky man what gets the *gal prize* is to treat the crowd!" This is seconded and carried by acclamation, without a dissenting voice.

A murmuring noise, as of some one in trouble, is now heard at the door: the crowd gives way: a beautiful mulatto girl, in a black silk dress, with low waist and short sleeves, and morocco slippers on her feet, is led in and placed upon the stand Mr. O'Brodereque has just vacated. Her complexion is that of a swarthy Greek; her countenance is moody and reflective; her feelings are stung with the poison of her degraded position. This last step of her disgrace broods in the melancholy of her face. Shame, pain, hope, and fear, combine to goad her very soul. But it's all for a bit of fun, clearly legal; it's all in accordance with society; misfortune is turned into a plaything, that generous, good, and noble-hearted men may be amused. Those who stand around her are extravagant with joy. After remaining a few moments in silence, a mute victim of generous freedom, she

turns her head bashfully, covers her face with her hands. Her feelings gush forth in a stream of tears; she cannot suppress them longer.

There is a touching beauty in her face, made more effective by the deplorable condition to which she is reduced. Again she looks upward, and covers her face with her hands; her soul seems merged in supplication to the God who rules all things aright. He is a forgiving God! Can he thus direct man's injustice to man, while this poor broken flower thus withers under the bane? Sad, melancholy, doomed! there is no hope, no joy for her. She weeps over her degradation.

"Stop that whimperin!" says a ruffianly bystander, who orders a coloured boy to let down her hair. He obeys the summons; it falls in thick, black, undulating tresses over her neck and shoulders. A few moments more, and she resumes a calm appearance, looks resolutely upon her auditors, with indignation and contempt pictured in her countenance.

"She'll soon get over that!" ejaculates another bystander, as he smooths the long beard on his haggard face. "Strip her down!" The request is no sooner made, than Mr. O'Brodereque mounts the stand to perform the feat. "Great country this, gentlemen!" he speaks, taking her by the shoulders.

"All off! all off, general!" is the popular demand.

The sensitive nature of the innocent girl recoils; she cringes from his touch; she shudders, and vainly attempts to resist. She must yield; the demand is imperative. Her dress falls at Mr. O'Brodereque's touch. She stands before the gazing crowd, exposed to the very thighs, holding

the loose folds of her dress in her hands. There is no sympathy for those moistened eyes; oh, no! it is a luscious feast (puritans have no part in the sin) for those who, in our land of love and liberty, buy and sell poor human nature, and make it food for serving hell.

Naked she stands for minutes; the assembled gentlemen have feasted their eyes,—good men have played the part of their good natures. General O'Brodereque, conscious of his dignity, orders her to be taken down. The waiter performs the duty, and she is led out midst the acclamations and plaudits of the crowd, who call for the raffle.

Mr. O'Brodereque hopes gentlemen are satisfied with what they have seen, and will pledge his honour that the pony and dog are quite as sound and healthy as the wench whose portions they have had a chance to shy; and for which (the extra sight), they should pay an extra treat. This, however, his generosity will not allow him to stand upon; and, seeing how time is precious, and the weather warm, he hopes his friends will excuse the presence of the animals, take his word of honour in consideration of the sight of the wench.

"Now, gentlemen," he says, "the throws are soon to commence, and all what ain't put down the tin better attend that ar' needful arrangement, quicker!"

As the general concludes this very significant invitation, Dan Bengal, Anthony Romescos, and Nath Nimrod, enter together. Their presence creates some little commotion, for Romescos is known to be turbulent, and very uncertain when liquor flows freely, which is the case at present.

"I say, general!—old hoss! I takes all the chances what's left," Romescos shouts at the top of his voice. His

eyes glare with anxiety,—his red, savage face, doubly sun-scorched, glows out as he elbows his way through the crowd up to the desk, where sits a corpulent clerk. "Beg your pardon, gentlemen: not so fast, if you please!" he says, entering names in his ledger, receiving money, "doing the polite of the establishment."

Romescos's coat and nether clothing are torn in several places, a hunting-belt girdles his waist; a bowie-knife (Sheffield make) protrudes from his breast-pocket, his hair hangs in jagged tufts over the collar of his coat, which, with the rough moccasons on his feet, give him an air of desperation, fierce and recklessness. His presence is evidently viewed with suspicion; he is a curious object which the crowd are willing to give ample space to.

"No, you don't take 'em all, neither!" says another, in a defiant tone. The remaining "chances" are at once put up for sale; they bring premiums, as one by one they are knocked down to the highest bidders, some as much as fifty per cent. advance. Gentlemen are not to know it, because Mr. O'Brodereque thinks his honour above everything else; but the fact is, there is a collusion between Romescos and the honourable Mr. O'Brodereque. The former is playing his part to create a rivalry that will put dollars and cents into the pocket of the latter.

"Well!" exclaims Romescos, with great indifference, as soon as the sale had concluded, "I've got seven throws, all lucky ones. I'll take any man's bet for two hundred dollars that I gets the gal prize." Nobody seems inclined to accept the challenge. A table is set in the centre of the saloon, the dice are brought on, amidst a jargon of noise and

confusion; to this is added drinking, smoking, swearing, and all kinds of small betting.

The raffle commences; one by one the numbers are called. Romescos' turn has come; all eyes are intently set upon him. He is celebrated for tricks of his trade; he seldom repudiates the character, and oftener prides in the name of a shrewd one, who can command a prize for his sharp dealing. In a word, he has a peculiar faculty of shielding the doubtful transactions of a class of men no less dishonest, but more modest in point of reputation.

Romescos spreads himself wonderfully, throws his dice, and exults over the result. He has turned up three sixes at the first and second throws, and two sixes and five at the third.

"Beat that! who can?" he says. No one discovers that he has, by a very dexterous movement, slipped a set of false dice into the box, while O'Brodereque diverted attention at the moment by introducing the pony into the saloon.

We will pass over many things that occurred, and inform the reader that Romescos won the first prize—the woman. The dog and pony prizes were carried off by legitimate winners. This specific part of the scene over, a band of negro minstrels are introduced, who strike up their happy glees, the music giving new life to the revelry. Such a medley of drinking, gambling, and carousing followed, as defies description. What a happy thing it is to be free; they feel this,—it it is a happy feeling! The sport lasts till the small hours of morning advances. Romescos is seen leaving the saloon very quietly.

"There!" says Mr. O'Brodereque exultingly, "he hasn't got so much of a showing. That nigger gal ain't what she's

cracked up to be!" and he shakes his head knowingly, thrusts his hands deep into his breeches pockets, smiles with an air of great consequence.

"Where did ye raise the critter? devvil of a feller ye be, Brodereque!" says a young sprig, giving his hat a particular set on the side of his head, and adjusting his eye-glass anew. "Ye ain't gin her a name, in all the showin'," he continues, drawlingly.

"That gal! She ain't worth so much, a'ter all. She's of Marston's stock; Ellen Juvarne, I think they call her. She's only good for her looks, in the animal way,—that's all!"

"Hav'n't told where ye got her, yet," interrupts the sprig; "none of yer crossin' corners, general."

"Well, I started up that gal of Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy. She takes it into her mind to get crazed now and then, and Marston had to sell her; and the Elder bought her for a trifle, cured up her thinkin'-trap, got her sound up for market, and I makes a strike with the Elder, and gets her at a tall bargain." Mr. O'Brodereque has lost none of his dignity, none of his honour, none of his hopes of getting into Congress by the speculation.

It is poor Ellen Juvarne; she has been cured for the market. She might have said, and with truth,—"You don't know me now, so wonderful are they who deal with my rights in this our world of liberty!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A NOT UNCOMMON SCENE SLIGHTLY CHANGED.

Romescos, having withdrawn from the saloon while the excitement raged highest, may be seen, with several others, seated at a table in the upper room. They are in earnest consultation,—evidently devising some plan for carrying out a deep-laid plot.

"I have just called my friend, who will give us the particulars about the constitutionality of the thing. Here he is. Mr. Scranton, ye see, knows all about such intricacies; ne is an editor! formerly from the North," one of the party is particular to explain, as he directs his conversation to Romescos. That gentleman of slave-cloth only knows the part they call the rascality; he pays the gentlemen of the learned law profession to shuffle him out of all the legal intricacies that hang around his murderous deeds. He seems revolving the thing over in his mind at the moment, makes no reply. The gentleman turns to Mr. Scranton—the same methodical gentleman we have described with the good Mrs. Rosebrook—hopes he will be good enough to advise on the point in question. Mr. Scranton sits in all the dignity of his serious philosophy, quite unmoved; his mind is nearly distracted about all that is constitutionally right or constitutionally wrong. He is bound to his own ways of thinking, and would suffer martyrdom before his own conscientious scruples would allow him to acknowledge a right

superior to *that* constitution. As for the humanity! that has nothing to do with the constitution, nothing to do with the laws of the land, nothing to do with popular government, —nothing to do with anything, and never should be taken into consideration when the point at issue involved negro property. The schedule of humanity would be a poor account at one's banker's. Mr. Scranton begins to smooth his face, which seems to elongate like a wet moon. "The question is, as I understand it, gentlemen, how far the law will give you a right to convict and sell the woman in the absence of papers and against the assertions of her owner, that she is free? Now, gentlemen, in the absence of my law books, and without the least scruple that I am legally right, for I'm seldom legally wrong, having been many years secretary to a senator in Congress who made it my particular duty to keep him posted on all points of the constitution (he drawls out with the serious complacency of a London beggar), I will just say that, whatever is legal must be just. Laws are always founded in justice—that's logical, you see,—and I always maintained it long 'afore I come south, long 'afore I knowed a thing about 'nigger law.' The point, thus far, you see, gentlemen, I've settled. Now then!" Mr. Scranton rests his elbow on the table, makes many legal gesticulations with his finger; he, however, disclaims all and every connection with the legal body, inasmuch as its members have sunk very much in the scale of character, and will require a deal of purifying ere he can call them brothers; but he knows a thing or two of constitutional law, and thus proceeds: "'Tain't a whit of matter about the woman, barring the dockerment's all right. You only want to prove that Marston bought her, that's all!

As for the young scraps, why—supposing they are his—that won't make a bit of difference; they are property for all that, subject to legal restraints. Your claim will be valid against it. You may have to play nicely over some intricate legal points. But, remember, nigger law is wonderfully elastic; it requires superhuman wisdom to unravel its social and political intricacies, and when I view it through the horoscope of an indefinite future it makes my very head ache. You may, however, let your claim revert to another, and traverse the case until such time as you can procure reliable proof to convict." Mr. Scranton asserts this as the force of his legal and constitutional acumen. He addresses himself to a mercantile-looking gentleman who sits at the opposite side of the table, attentively listening. He is one of several of Marston's creditors, who sit at the table; they have attached certain property, and having some doubts of overthrowing Marston's plea of freedom, which he has intimated his intention to enter, have called in the valuable aid of Romescos. That indomitable individual, however, has more interests than one to serve, and is playing his cards with great "diplomatic skill." Indeed, he often remarks that his wonderful diplomatic skill would have been a great acquisition to the federal government, inasmuch as it would have facilitated all its Southern American projects.

The point in question at present, and which they must get over, in order to prove the property, is made more difficult by the doubt in which the origin of Clotilda has always been involved. Many are the surmises about her parentage—many are the assertions that she is not of negro extraction (she has no one feature indicating it), but

no one can positively assert where she came from; in a word, no one dare! Hence is constituted the ground for fearing the issue of Marston's notice of freedom.

"Well! I'll own it puzzles my cunnin'; there's a way to get round it—there is—but deuced if 'tain't too much for my noddle," Romescos interposes, taking a little more whiskey, and seeming quite indifferent about the whole affair. "Suppose—Marston—comes—forward! yes, and brings somebody to swear as a kind a' sideways? That'll be a poser in asserting their freedom; it'll saddle you creditors with the burden of proof. There'll be the rub; and ye can't plead a right to enjoin the schedule he files in bankruptcy unless ye show how they were purchased by him. Perchance on some legal uncertainty it might be done,—by your producing proof that he had made an admission, anterior to the levy, of their being purchased by him," Romescos continues, very wisely appealing to his learned and constitutional friend, Mr. Scranton, who yields his assent by adding that the remarks are very legal, and contain truths worth considering, inasmuch as they involve great principles of popular government. "I think our worthy friend has a clear idea of the points," Mr. Scranton concludes.

"One word more, gentlemen: a bit of advice what's worth a right smart price to ye all (here he parenthesises by saying he has great sympathy for creditors in distress), and ye must profit by it, for yer own interests. As the case now stands, it's a game for lawyers to play and get fat at. And, seein' how Marston's feelins are up in a sort of tender way, he feels strong about savin' them young 'uns; and ye, nor all the gentlemen of the lower place, can't make 'em

property, if he plays his game right;—he knows how to! ye'll only make a fuss over the brutes, while the lawyers bag all the game worth a dollar. Never seed a nigger yet what raised a legal squall, that didn't get used up in law leakins; lawyers are sainted pocket masters! But—that kind a' stuff!—it takes a mighty deal of cross-cornered swearing to turn it into property. The only way ye can drive the peg in so the lawyers won't get hold on't, is by sellin' out to old Graspum (Norman, I mean), he does up such business as fine as a fiddle. Make the best strike with him ye can—he's as tough as a knot on nigger trade!—and, if there's any making property out on 'em, he's just the tinker to do it."

They shake their heads doubtingly, as if questioning the policy of the advice. Mr. Scranton, however, to whom all looked with great solicitation, speaks up, and affirms the advice to be the wiser course, as a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

"Oh, yes!" says Romescos, significantly, "you'll be safe then, and free from responsibility; Graspum's a great fellow to buy risks; but, seeing how he's not popular with juries, he may want to play behind the scenes, continue to prosecute the case in the name of the creditors,—that's all! Curious work, this making property out of doubtful women. Sell out to them what understands the curious of the things, clear yerselfs of the perplexin' risks (ye won't bag a bit of the game, you won't). Saddle it on Norman; he knows the philosophy of nigger trade, and can swim through a sea of legal perplexities in nigger cases." Mr. Romescos never gave more serious advice in his life; he finishes his whiskey, adjusts his hat slouchingly on his head, bids them good

night; and, in return for their thanks, assures them that they are welcome. He withdraws; Mr. Scranton, after a time, gets very muddled; so much so, that, when daylight appears, he finds, to his utter astonishment, he has enjoyed a sweet sleep on the floor, some of his quizzical friends having disfigured his face very much after the fashion of a clown's. He modestly, and mechanically, picks up his lethargic body, views his constitutional self in the glass, and is much horrified, much disgusted with those who perpetrated the freak.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THEY ARE ALL GOING TO BE SOLD.

SLOWLY we pass through the precious scenes, hoping our readers will indulge us with their patience.

Five days have passed since Clotilda's departure; her absence is creating alarm. No one knows anything of her! a general search is instituted, but the searchers search in vain. Maxwell has eluded suspicion—Franconia no one for a moment suspects. Colonel M'Carstrow—his mind, for the time, absorbed in the charms of his young bride—gives little attention to the matter. He only knows that he has signed a bond for fifteen hundred dollars, to indemnify the sheriff, or creditors, in the event of loss; he reconciles himself with the belief that she has been enticed into some of the neighbouring bright houses, from which he can regain her in the course of time. M'Carstrow knows little of Clotilda's real character; and thus the matter rests a time.

The sheriff,—important gentleman of an important office,—will give himself no concern about the matter: the plaintiff's attorney acknowledged the deed of release, which is quite enough for him. Graspum, a perfect savan where human property was to be judged, had decided that her square inches of human vitality were worth strong fifteen hundred; that was all desirable for the sheriff—it would leave

margin enough to cover the cost. But M'Carstrow, when given the bond, knew enough of nigger law to demand the insertion of a clause leaving it subject to the question of property, which is to be decided by the court. A high court this, where freemen sit assembled to administer curious justice. What constitutional inconsistencies hover over the monstrous judicial dignity of this court,—this court having jurisdiction over the monetary value of beings moulded after God's own image! It forms a happy jurisprudence for those who view it for their selfish ends; it gains freedom tyranny's license, gives birth to strange incongruities, clashing between the right of property in man and all the viler passions of our nature. It holds forth a jurisprudence that turns men into hounds of hell, devouring one another, and dragging human nature down into the very filth of earth.

Marston's troubles keep increasing. All the preliminaries of law necessary to a sale of the undisputed property have been gone through; the day of its disposal has arrived. The children, Annette and Nicholas, have remained in a cell, suffering under its malarious atmosphere, anxiously awaiting their fate. Marston has had them taught to read,—contrary to a generous law of a generous land,—and at intervals they sit together pondering over little books he has sent them.

What are such little books to them? the unbending avarice of human nature, fostered by slavery's power, is grappling at their existence. There is no sympathy for them; it is crushed out by the law which makes them chattels. Oh, no! sympathy, generosity, human affections, have little to do with the transactions of slave dealing; that

belongs to commerce,—commerce has an unbending rule to maintain while money is to be made by a legalised traffic.

We must invite the reader to accompany us to the county gaol, on the morning of sale.

The "gang"—Marston's slaves—have been ordered to prepare themselves for the market; the yard resounds with their jargon. Some are arranging their little clothing, washing, "brightening up" their faces to make the property show off in the market. Others are preparing homony for breakfast; children, in ragged garments, are toddling, running, playing, and sporting about the brick pavement; the smallest are crouched at the feet of their mothers, as if sharing the gloom or nonchalance of their feeling. Men are gathering together the remnants of some cherished memento of the old plantation; they had many a happy day upon it. Women view as things of great worth the little trinkets with which good master, in former days, rewarded their energy. They recall each happy association of the cabin. Husbands, or such as should be husbands, look upon their wives with solicitude; they feel it is to be the last day they will meet together on earth. They may meet in heaven; there is no slavery there. Mothers look upon their children only to feel the pangs of sorrow more keenly; they know and feel that their offspring are born for the market, not for the enjoyment of their affections. They may be torn from them, and sold like sheep in the shambles. Happy, free country! How fair, how beautiful the picture of constitutional rights! how in keeping with every-day scenes of southern life!

"I'ze gwine to be sold; your gwine to be sold; we're all gwine to be sold. Wonder what masr's gwine t'buy dis

child," says Aunt Rachel, arranging her best dress, making her face "shine just so." Aunt Rachel endeavours to suit her feelings to the occasion, trims her bandana about her head with exquisite taste, and lets the bright-coloured points hang about her ears in great profusion.

"Da'h 's a right smart heap o' dollar in dis old nigger, yet! —if mas'r what gwine t'buy 'em know how't fotch um out; Mas'r must do da'h clean ting wid dis child," Rachel says, as if exulting over the value of her own person. She brushes and brushes, views and reviews herself in a piece of mirror —(several are waiting to borrow it)—thinks she is just right for market, asks herself what's the use of fretting? It's a free country, with boundless hospitality—(of the southern stamp)—and why not submit to all freedom's dealings? Aunt Rachel is something of a philosopher.

"Aunte! da' would'nt gin much fo'h yer old pack a' bones if mas'r what gwine to buy ye know'd ye like I. Ye' h'ant da property what bring long price wid Buckra," replies Dandy, who views Aunt Rachel rather suspiciously, seems inclined to relieve her conceit, and has taken very good care that his own dimensions are trimmed up to the highest point.

"Dis nigger would'nt swop h'r carcas fo'h journ. Dat she don't," Rachel retorts.

"Reckon how ye wouldn't, ah!" Dandy's face fills with indignation. "Buckra what sting ye back wid de lash 'll buy ye old bag a' bones fo'h down south; and when 'e get ye down da' he make ye fo'h a corn grinder." Dandy is somewhat inflated with his rank among the domestics; he is none of yer common niggers, has never associated with black, field niggers, which he views as quite too common for his

aristocratic notions, has on his very best looks, his hair combed with extraordinary care, his shirt collar dangerously standing above his ears. He feels something better than nigger blood in his composition, knows the ins and outs of nigger philosophy; he knows it to be the very best kind of philosophy for a "nigger" to put on a good appearance at the shambles. A dandy nigger is not plantation stock,—hence he has "trimmed up," and hopes to find a purchaser in want of his specific kind of property; it will save him from that field-life so much dreaded.

The property, in all its varied shades, comes rolling out from all manner of places in and about the gaol, filling the yard. It is a momentous occasion, the most momentous of their life-time. And yet many seem indifferent about its consequences. They speak of the old plantation, jeer each other about the value of themselves, offer bets on the price they will bring, assert a superiority over each other, and boast of belonging to some particular grade of the property. Harry—we mean Harry the preacher—is busy getting his wife and children ready for market. He evinces great affection for his little ones, has helped his wife to arrange their apparel with so much care. The uninitiated might imagine them going to church instead of the man shambles. Indeed, so earnest are many good divines in the promotion of slavery, that it would not be unbecoming to form a connection between the southern church and the southern man shambles. The material aid they now give each other for the purpose of keeping up the man trade would be much facilitated.

However, there is a chance of Harry being sold to a brother divine, who, by way of serving his good Lord and righteous master, may let him out to preach, after the old

way. Harry will then be serving his brother in brotherly faith; that is, he will be his brother's property, very profitable, strong in the faith with his dear divine brother, to whom he will pay large tribute for the right to serve the same God.

Harry's emotions—he has been struggling to suppress them—have got beyond his control; tears will now and then show themselves and course down his cheeks. "Never mind, my good folks! it is something to know that Jesus still guards us; still watches over us." He speaks encouragingly to them. "The scourge of earth is man's wrongs, the death-spring of injustice. We are made bearers of the burden; but that very burden will be our passport into a brighter, a juster world. Let us meekly bear it. Cheer up! arm yourselves with the spirit of the Lord; it will give you fortitude to live out the long journey of slave life. How we shall feel when, in heaven, we are brought face to face with master, before the Lord Judge. Our rights and his wrongs will then weigh in the balance of heavenly justice." With these remarks, Harry counsels them to join him in prayer. He kneels on the brick pavement of the yard, clasps his hands together as they gather around him kneeling devotedly. Fervently he offers up a prayer,—he invokes the God of heaven to look down upon them, to bestow his mercy upon master, to incline his ways in the paths of good; and to protect these, his unfortunate children, and guide them through their separate wayfaring. The ardour, grotesqueness, and devotion of this poor forlorn group, are painfully touching. How it presents the portrait of an oppressed race! how sunk is the nature that has thus degraded it! Under the painful burden of their sorrow they yet manifest

the purity of simple goodness. "Oh! Father in heaven, hast thou thus ordained it to be so?" breaks forth from Harry's lips, as the criminals, moved by the affecting picture, gather upon the veranda, and stand attentive listeners. Their attention seems rivetted to his words: the more vicious, as he looks through grated bars upon them, whispers words of respect.

Harry has scarcely concluded his prayer when the sheriff, accompanied by several brokers (slave-dealers), comes rushing through the transept into the yard. The sheriff is not rude; he approaches Harry, tells him he is a good boy, has no objection to his praying, and hopes a good master will buy him. He will do all he can to further his interests, having heard a deal about his talents. He says this with good-natured measure, and proceeds to take a cursory view of the felons. While he is thus proceeding, the gentlemen of trade who accompanied him are putting "the property" through a series of examinations.

"Property like this ye don't start up every day," says one. "Best I'ze seen come from that ar' district. Give ye plenty corn, down there, don't they, boys?" enjoins another, walking among them, and every moment bringing the end of a small whip which he holds in his right hand about their legs. This, the gentleman remarks, is merely for the purpose (one of the phrases of the very honourable trade) of testing their nimbleness.

"Well!" replies a tall, lithe dealer, whose figure would seem to have been moulded for chasing hogs through the swamp, "There's some good bits among it; but it won't stand prime, as a lot!" The gentleman, who seems to have a nicely balanced mind for judging the human nature value

of such things, is not quite sure that they have been bacon fed. He continues his learned remarks. "Ye'h han't had full tuck out, I reckon, boys?" he inquires of them, deliberately examining the mouths and nostrils of several. The gentleman is very cool in this little matter of trade; it is an essential element of southern democracy; some say, nothing more!

"Yes, Boss!" replies Enoch, one of the negroes; "Mas'r al'as good t' e niggers, gin him bacon free times a week—sometimes mo' den dat." Several voices chime in to affirm what Enoch says

"A'h, very good. Few planters in that district give their negroes bacon; and an all corn-fed nigger won't last two years on a sugar plantation," remarks one of the gentlemen dealers, as he smokes his cigar with great nonchalance.

While these quaint appendancies of the trade are proceeding, Romescos and Graspum make their appearance. They have come to forestall opinion, to make a few side-winding remarks. They are ready to enter upon the disgusting business of examining property more carefully, more scrupulously, more in private. The honourable sheriff again joins the party. He orders that every accommodation be afforded the gentlemen in their examinations of the property. Men, women, and children—sorrowing property—are made to stand erect; to gesticulate their arms; to expand their chests, to jump about like jackals, and to perform sundry antics pleasing to the gentlemen lookers-on. This is all very free, very democratic, very gentlemanly in the way of trade,—very necessary to test the ingredient of the valuable square inches of the property. What matters all

this! the honourable sheriff holds it no dishonour; modest gentlemen never blush at it; the coarse dealer makes it his study,—he trades in human nature; the happy democrat thinks it should have a co-fellowship with southern hospitality—so long and loudly boasted.

Those little necessary displays over, the honourable sheriff invites his distinguished friends to "have a cigar round;" having satisfied their taste in gymnastarising the property. Romescos, however, thinks he has not quite satisfied his feelings; he is very dogged on nigger flesh. The *other* gentlemen may smoke their cigars; Mr. Romescos thinks he will enjoy the exercise of his skill in testing the tenacity of negroes' chests; which he does by administering heavy blows, which make them groan out now and then. Groans, however, don't amount to much; they are only nigger groans. Again Mr. Romescos applies the full force of his hands upon their ears; then he will just pull them systematically. "Nice property!" he says, telling the forbearing creatures not to mind the pain.

Messrs. Graspum and Romescos will make a close inspection of a few pieces. Here, several men and women are led into a basement cell, under the veranda, and stript most rudely. No discrimination is permitted. Happy freedom! What a boon is liberty! Mr. Romescos views their nice firm bodies, and their ebony black skins, with great skill and precaution; his object is to prove the disposition of the articles,—strong evidence being absence of scars. He lays his bony fingers on their left shoulders—they being compelled to stand in a recumbent position—tracing their bodies to the hips and thighs. Here the process ends. Mr. Romescos has satisfied his very nice judgment on the solidity

of the human-flesh-property—he has put their bodies through other disgusting inspections—they belong to the trade—which cannot be told here; but he finds clean skins, very smooth, without scars or cuts, or dangerous diseases. He laughs exultingly, orders the people to stow themselves in their clothes again, and relights his cigar. "If it 'ant a tall lot!" he whispers to Graspum, and gives him a significant touch with his elbow. "Bright—smooth as a leather ninepence; han't had a lash (Marston was a fool, or his niggers are angels, rather black, though!), couldn't start up a scar on their flesh. A little trimmin' down—it wants it, you see!—to make it show off; must have it—eh! Graspum, old feller? It only wants a little, though, and them dandy niggers, and that slap-up preacher, will bring a smart price fixed up. Great institution! The preacher 's got knowin'; can discourse like a college-made deacon, and can convert a whole plantation with his nigger eloquence. A nigger preacher with Bible knowin, when it's smart, is right valuable when ye want to keep the pious of a plantation straight. And then! when the preacher 'ant got a notion 'a runnin away in him." Romescos crooks his finger upon Graspum's arm, whispers cautiously in his ear.

"There 'll be a sharp bidding for some of it; they 'll run up some on the preacher. He 'll be a capital investment,—pay more than thirty per cent. insinuates another gentleman—a small inquisitive looking dealer in articles of the nigger line. When a planter 's got a big gang a' niggers, and is just fool enough to keep such a thing for the special purpose of making pious valuable in 'um," Mr. Romescos rejoins, shrugging his shoulders, rubbing his little hawk's eyes, and looking seriously indifferent. Romescos gives wonderful

evidence of his "first best cunning propensities;" and here he fancies he has pronounced an opinion that will be taken as profound. He affects heedlessness of everything, is quite disinterested, and, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets, assumes an air of dignity that would not undignify my Lord Chief Justice.

"Let us see them two bits of disputed property,—where are they?" inquires Graspum, turning half round, and addressing himself to the gaoler.

"In the close cells," is the quick reply,—"through the narrow vault, up the stone passage, and on the right, in the arched cell."

The gaoler—good, honest-hearted man—leads the way, through a chilly vault, up the narrow passage, to the left wing of the building. The air is pestiferous; warm and diseased, it fans us as we approach. The gaoler puts his face to the grating, and in a guttural voice, says, "You'r wanted young uns." They understand the summons; they come forward as if released from torture to enjoy the pure air of heaven. Confinement, dreary and damp, has worn deep into their systems.

Annette speaks feebly, looks pale and sickly. Her flaxen curls still dangle prettily upon her shoulders. She expected her mother; that mother has not come. The picture seems strange; she looks childishly and vacantly round,—at the dealers, at Graspum, at the sheriff, at the familiar faces of the old plantation people. She recognizes Harry, and would fain leap into his arms. Nicholas, less moved by what is going on around him, hangs reluctantly behind, holding by the skirt of Annette's frock. He has lost that vivacity and pertness so characteristic on the plantation. Happy picture

of freedom's love! Happy picture of immortalised injustice! Happy picture of everything that is unhappy! How modest is the boast that we live to be free; and that in our virtuous freedom a child's mother has been sold for losing her mind: a faithful divine, strong with love for his fellow divines, is to be sold for his faith; the child—the daughter of the democrat—they say, will be sold from her democratic father. The death-stinging enemy Washington and Jefferson sought to slaughter—to lay ever dead at their feet, has risen to life again. Annette's mother has fled to escape its poison. We must pause! we must not discourse thus in our day, when the sordid web of trade is being drawn over the land by King Cotton.

The children, like all such doubtful stock, are considered very fancy, very choice of their kind. It must be dressed in style to suit nice eyes at the shambles.

"Well! ye'r right interesting looking," says the sheriff—(Messrs. Graspum and Co. look upon them with great concern, now and then interrupting with some observations upon their pedigree)—taking them by the arms, and again rumpling their hair by rubbing his hands over their heads. "Fix it up, trim; we must put them up along with the rest to-day. "It 'll make Marston—I pity the poor fellow—show his hand on the question of their freedom. Mr. sheriff, being sufficiently secured against harm, is quite indifferent about the latent phases of the suit. He remarks, with great legal logic (we mean legal slave logic), that Marston must object to the sale when the children are on the stand. "It is very pretty kind a' property, very like Marston—will be as handsome as pictures when they grow up," he says, ordering it put back to be got ready.

"Why didn't my mother come?" the child whimpers, dewy tears decorating her eyes. Why won't she come back and take me to the plantation again? I want her to come back; I've waited so long." As she turns to follow the gaoler (Nicholas still holds her by the skirt of her frock), her flaxen curls again wave to and fro upon her shoulders, adding beauty to her childlike simplicity. "You'll grow to be something, one of these days, won't ye, little dear?" says the gaoler, taking her by the hand. She replies in those silent and touching arguments of the soul; she raises her soft blue eyes, and heaven fills them with tears, which she lifts her tiny hands to wipe away.

Nicholas tremblingly (he cannot understand the strange movement) follows them through the vault; he looks up submissively, and with instinctive sympathy commences a loud blubbering. "You're going to be sold, little uns! but, don't roar about it; there's no use in that," says the gaoler, inclining to sympathy.

Nicholas does'nt comprehend it; he looks up to Annette, plaintively, and, forgetting his own tears, says, in a whisper, "Don't cry, Annette; they 'll let us go and see mother, and mother will be so kind to us——."

"It does seem a pity to sell ye, young 'uns; ye'r such nice 'uns,—have so much interestin' in yer little skins!" interrupts the gaoler, suddenly. The man of keys could unfold a strange history of misery, suffering, and death, if fear of popular opinion, illustrated in popular liberty, did not seal his lips. He admits the present to be* rather an uncommon case, says it makes a body feel kind a' unhinged

* We are narrating a scene related to us by the very gaoler we here describe, and as nearly as possible in his own language.

about the heart, which heart, however rocky at times, will have its own way when little children are sorrowing. "And then, to know their parents! that's what tells deeper on a body's feeling,—it makes a body look into the hereafter." The man of keys and shackles would be a father, if the law did but let him. There is a monster power over him, a power he dreads—it is the power of unbending democracy, moved alone by fretful painstakers of their own freedom. "Poor little things! ye 'r most white, yes! (suddenly changing) just as white as white need be. Property's property, though, all over the world. What's sanctioned by the constitution, and protected by the spirit and wisdom of Congress, must be right, and maintained," the gaoler concludes. His heart is at war with his head; but the head has the power, and he must protect the rights of an unrighteous system. They have arrived at a flight of steps, up which they ascend, and are soon lost in its windings. They are going to be dressed for the market.

The sheriff is in the yard, awaiting the preparation of the property. Even he—iron-hearted, they say—gives them a look of generous solicitude, as they pass out. He really feels there is a point, no less in the scale of slave dealing, beyond which there is something so repugnant that hell itself might frown upon it. "It's a phase too hard, touches a body's conscience," he says, not observing Romescos at his elbow.

"Conscience!" interrupts Romescos, his eyes flashing like meteors of red fire, "the article don't belong to the philosophy of our business. Establish conscience—let us, gentlemen, give way to our feelins, and trade in nigger property 'd be deader than Chatham's statue, what was pulled

through our streets by the neck." The great obstacle, however, is only this—it is profitable in its way! Romescos cautiously attempts to shield this, but it will not do.

The gaoler, protruding his head from a second-story window, like a mop in a rain storm, enquires if it is requisite to dress the children in their very best shine. It is evident he merely views them as two bales of merchandise.

The sheriff, angrily, says, "Yes! I told you that already. Make them look as bright as two new pins." His honour has been contemplating how they will be mere pins in the market,—pins to bolt the doors of justice, pins to play men into Congress, pins to play men out of Congress, pins to play a President into the White House.

An old negress, one of the plantation nurses, is called into service. She commences the process of preparing them for market. They are nicely washed, dressed in clean clothes; they shine out as bright and white as anybody's children. Their heads look so sleek, their hair is so nicely combed, so nicely parted, so nicely curled. The old slave loves them,—she loved their father. Her skill has been lavished upon them,—they look as choice and interesting as the human property of any democratic gentleman can be expected to do. Let us be patriotic, let us be law-loving, patient law-abiding citizens, loving that law of our free country which puts them under the man-vender's hammer,—say our peace-abiding neighbours.

The gaoler has not been long in getting Annette and Nicholas ready. He brings them forward, so neatly and prettily dressed: he places them among the "gang." But they are disputed property: hence all that ingenuity which the system engenders for the advancement of dealers is

brought into use to defeat the attempt tc assert their freedom. Romescos declares it no difficult matter to do this: he has the deadly weapon in his possession; he can work (shuffle) the debt into Graspum's hands, and he can supply the proof to convict. By this very desirable arrangement the thing may be made nicely profitable.

No sooner has Aunt Rachel seen the children in their neat and familiar attire, than her feelings bound with joy,—she cannot longer restrain them. She has watched Marston's moral delinquencies with suspicion; but she loves the children none the less. And with honest negro nature she runs to them, clasps them to her bosom, fondles them, and kisses them like a fond mother. The happy associations of the past, contrasted with their present unhappy condition, unbind the fountain of her solicitude,—she pours it upon them, warm and fervent. "Gwine t' sell ye, too! Mas'r, poor old Mas'r, would'nt sell ye, no how! that he don't. But poor old Boss hab 'e trouble now, God bless 'em," she says, again pressing Annette to her bosom, nearer and nearer, with fondest, simplest, holiest affection. Looking intently in the child's face, she laughs with the bounding joy of her soul; then she smooths its hair with her brawny black hands: they contrast strangely with the pure carnatic of the child's cheek.

"Lor! good Lor, Mas'r Buckra," aunt Rachel exclaims, "if eber de Lor' smote 'e vengence on yeh, 't 'll be fo' sellin' de likes a' dese. Old Mas'r tinks much on 'em, fo' true. Gwine t' sell dem what Mas'r be so fond on? Hard tellin' what Buckra don't sell win i' makes money on him. Neber mind, children; de Lor' an't so unsartin as white man. He,—da'h good Mas'r yonder in the clouds,—save

ye yet; he'll make white man gin ye back when de day o' judgment come." Aunt Rachel has an instinctive knowledge of the errors, accidents, and delays which have brought about this sad event,—she becomes absorbed in their cares, as she loses sight of her own trouble.

All ready for the market, they are chained together in pairs, men and women, as if the wrongs they bore had made them untrustworthy.

Romescos, ever employed in his favourite trade, is busily engaged chaining up—assorting the pairs! One by one they quietly submit to the proceeding, until he reaches Harry. That minister-of-the-gospel piece of property thinks,—that is, is foolish enough to think,—his nigger religion a sufficient guarantee against any inert propensity to run away. "Now, good master, save my hands from irons, and my heart from pain. Trust me, let me go unbound; my old Master trust me wid 'is life——"

"Halloo!" says Romescos, quickly interrupting, and beginning to bristle with rage; "preach about old Master here you'll get the tinglers, I reckon. Put 'em on—not a grunt—or you 'll get thirty more—yes, a collar on yer neck." Holding a heavy stick over the poor victim's head, for several minutes with one hand, he rubs the other, clenched, several times across his nose. Graspum interposes by reminding the minister that it is for his interest to be very careful how he makes any reply to white gentlemen.

" Why, massa, I's the minister on de plantation. My old master wouldn't sell—wouldn't do so wid me. Master knows I love God, am honest and peaceable. Why chain the honest? why chain the peaceable? why chain the innocent? They need no fetters, no poisoning shackles. The

guilty only fear the hand of retribution," says Harry, a curl of contempt on his lip. He takes a step backwards as Romescos holds the heavy irons before him.

"You don't come nigger preacher over this ar' child; 't'ant what's crack'd up to be. I larns niggers to preach different tunes. Don't spoil prime stock for such nonsense—"

"Master Sheriff will stand answerable for me," interrupts Harry, turning to that honourable functionary, and claiming his protection. That gentleman says it is rather out of his line to interfere.

"Not a preacher trick, I say again (Romescos evinces signs of increasing temper), ya' black theologin. Preachers can't put on such dignity when they'r property." Preachers of colour must be doubly humbled: they must be humble before God, humbled before King Cotton, humbled before the king dealer, who will sell them for their dollars worth. Harry must do the bidding of his king master; his monkey tricks won't shine with such a philosopher as Romescos. The man of bones, blood, and flesh, can tell him to sell a nigger preacher to his brother of the ministry, and make it very profitable. He assures Harry, while holding the shackles in his hands, that he may put on just as much of the preacher as he can get, when he gets to the shambles, and hears the fives and tens bidding on his black hide.

Harry must submit; he does it with pain and reluctance. He is chained to his wife (a favour suggested by the sheriff), with whom he can walk the streets of a free country,—but they must be bound in freedom's iron fellowship. The iron shackle clasps his wrist; the lock ticks as Romescos turns the key: it vibrates to his very heart. With a sigh he says,

"Ours is a life of sorrow, streaming its dark way along a dangerous path. It will ebb into the bright and beautiful of heaven; that heaven wherein we put our trust—where our hopes are strengthened. O! come the day when we shall be borne to the realms of joy—joy celestial! There no unholy shade of birth—unholy only to man—shall doom us; the colour of our skin will not there be our misfortune—"

"What!" quickly interrupts Romescos, "what's that?" The property minister, thus circumstanced, must not show belligerent feelings. Romescos simply, but very skilfully, draws his club; measures him an unamiable blow on the head, fells him to the ground. The poor wretch struggles a few moments, raises his manacled hands to his face as his wife falls weeping upon his shuddering body. She supplicates mercy at the hands of the ruffian—the ruffian torturer. "Quietly, mas'r; my man 'ill go wid me," says the woman, interposing her hand to prevent a second blow.

Harry opens his eyes imploringly, casts a look of pity upon the man standing over him. Romescos is in the attitude of dealing him another blow. The wretch stays his hand. "Do with me as you please, master; you are over me. My hope will be my protector when your pleasure will have its reward."

A second thought has struck Romescos; the nigger isn't so bad, after all. "Well, reckon how nobody won't have no objection to ya'r thinking just as ya'v mind to; but ya' can't talk ya'r own way, nor ya' can't have ya'r own way with this child. A nigger what puts on parson airs (if it is a progressive age nigger), musn't put on fast notions to a white gentleman of my standing! If he does, we just take

'em out on him by the process of a small quantity of first-rate knockin down," says Romescos, amiably lending him a hand to get up. Graspum and the honourable sheriff are measuredly pacing up and down the yard, talking over affairs of state, and the singular purity of their own southern democracy—that democracy which will surely elect the next President. Stepping aside in one of his sallies, Graspum, in a half whisper, reminds Romescos that, now the nigger has shown symptoms of disobedience, he had better prove the safety of the shackles. "Right! right! all right!" the man of chains responds; he had forgot this very necessary piece of amusement. He places both hands upon the shackles; grasps them firmly; places his left foot against Harry's stomach; and then, uttering a fierce imprecatiou, makes his victim pull with might and main while he braces against him with full power. The victim, groaning under the pain, begs for mercy. Mercy was not made for him. Freedom and mercy, in this our land of greatness, have been betrayed.

Harry, made willing property, is now placed by the side of his wife, as four small children—the youngest not more than two years old—cling at the skirts of her gown. The children are scarcely old enough to chain; their strong affections for poor chained mother and father are quite enough to guarantee against their running away. Romescos, in his ample kindness, will allow them to toddle their way to market. They are not dangerous property;—they have their feelings, and will go to market to be sold, without running away.

The gang is ready. The gaoler, nearly out of breath,

congratulates himself upon the manner of dispatching business at his establishment. Romescos will put them through a few evolutions before marching in the street; so, placing himself at their right, and the gaoler at their left flank, they are made to march and counter-march several times round the yard. This done, the generous gaoler invites the gentlemen into his office: he has a good glass of whiskey waiting their superior tastes.

The ward gates are opened; the great gate is withdrawn; the property, linked in iron fellowship,—the gentlemen having taken their whiskey,—are all ready for the word, march! This significant admonition the sheriff gives, and the property sets off in solemn procession, like wanderers bound on a pilgrimage. Tramp, tramp, tramp, their footsteps fall in dull tones as they sally forth, in broken file, through the long isles. Romescos is in high glee,—his feelings bound with exultation, he marches ahead, twirling a stick over his head. They are soon in the street, where he invites them to strike up a lively song—"Jim crack corn, and I don't care, fo'h Mas'r's gone away!" he shouts; and several strike up, the rest joining in the old plantation chorus—"Away! away! away! Mas'r's gone away." Thus, with jingling chorus and seemingly joyous hearts, they march down to the man-market. The two children, Annette and Nicholas, trail behind, in charge of the sheriff, whose better feelings seem to be troubling him very much. Every now and then, as they walk by his side, he casts a serious look at Annette, as if conscience, speaking in deep pulsations, said it wasn't just right to sell such an interesting little creature. Onward they marched, his head and heart warring the while.

"There's something about it that does'nt seem to come just right in a fellow's feelins," keeps working itself in his mind, until at length he mutters the words. It is the natural will to do good, struggling against the privileges which a government gives ungovernable men to do wrong.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LET US FOLLOW POOR HUMAN NATURE TO THE MAN SHAMBLES.

Gentlemen dealers in want of human property,—planters in want of a few prime people,—brokers who have large transactions in such articles,—and factors who, being rather sensitive of their dignity, give to others the negotiation of their business,—are assembled in and around the mart, a covered shed, somewhat resembling those used by railroad companies for the storing of coarse merchandise. Marston's negroes are to be sold. Suspicious circumstances are connected with his sudden decline: rumour has sounded her seven-tongued symbols upon it, and loud are the speculations. The cholera has made mighty ravages; but the cholera could not have done all. Graspum has grasped the plantation, quietly and adroitly, but he has not raised the veil of mystery that hangs over the process. There must be long explanations before the obdurate creditors are satisfied.

The irons have been removed from the property, who are crouched round the stand (an elevated platform) in a forlorn group, where sundry customers can scrutinize their proportions. Being little or no fancy among it, the fast young gentlemen of the town, finding nothing worthy their attention and taste, make a few cursory observations, and slowly swagger out of the ring. The children are wonder-

fully attractive and promising; they are generally admired by the customers, who view them with suspicious glances. Annette's clean white skin and fine features are remarkably promising,—much valued as articles of merchandise,—and will, in time, pay good interest. Her youth, however, saves her from present sacrifice,—it thwarts that spirited competition which older property of the same quality produces when about to be knocked down under the hammer of freedom.

It is a great day, a day of tribulation, with the once happy people of Marston's plantation. No prayer is offered up for them, their souls being only embodied in their market value. Prayers are not known at the man shambles, though the hammer of the vender seals with death the lives of many. No gentleman in modest black cares aught for such death. The dealer will not pay the service fee! Good master is no longer their protector; his familiar face, so buoyant with joy and affection, has passed from them. No more will that strong attachment manifest itself in their greetings. Fathers will be fathers no longer—it is unlawful. Mothers cannot longer clasp their children in their arms with warm affections. Children will no longer cling around their mothers,—no longer fondle in that bosom where once they toyed and joyed.

The articles murmur among themselves, cast longing glances at each other, meet the gaze of their purchasers, with pain and distrust brooding over their countenances. They would seem to trace the character—cruel or gentle—of each in his look.

Was it that God ordained one man thus to doom another? No! the very thought repulsed the plea. He never made one man's life to be sorrow and fear—to be the basest object, upon which blighting strife for gold fills the passions of

tyrants. He never made man to be a dealer in his own kind. He never made man after his own image to imprecate the wrath of heaven by blackening earth with his foul deeds. He never made man to blacken this fair portion of earth with storms of contention, nor to overthrow the principles that gave it greatness. He never made man to fill the cup that makes the grim oppressor fierce in his triumphs over right.

Come reader—come with us: let us look around the pale of these common man shambles. Here a venerable father sits, a bale of merchandise, moved with the quick pulsation of human senses. He looks around him as the storm of resentment seems ready to burst forth: his wrinkled brow and haggard face in vain ask for sympathy. A little further on, and a mother leans over her child,—tremblingly draws it to her side; presses it nearer and nearer to her bosom. Near her, feeding a child with crumbs of bread, is a coarse negro, whose rough exterior covers a good heart. He gives a glance of hate and scorn at those who are soon to tear from him his nearest and dearest. A gloomy ring of sullen faces encircle us: hope, fear, and contempt are pictured in each countenance. Anxious to know its doom, the pent-up soul burns madly within their breasts; no tears can quench the fire—freedom only can extinguish it. But, what are such things? mere trifles when the soul loves only gold. What are they to men who buy such human trifles? who buy and sell mankind, with feelings as unmoved as the virgin heart that knows no guilt.

Various are the remarks made by those who are taking a cursory view of the people; very learned in nigger nature are many; their sayings evince great profoundness. A

question seems to be the separating of wenches from their young 'uns. This is soon settled. Graspum, who has made his appearance, and is very quaintly and slowly making his apprehensions known, informs the doubting spectators that Romescos, being well skilled, will do that little affair right up for a mere trifle. It takes him to bring the nonsense out of nigger wenches. This statement being quite satisfactory, the gentlemen purchasers are at rest on that point.

The hour of sale has arrived,—the crier rings his bell, the purchasers crowd up to the stand, the motley group of negroes take the alarm, and seem inclined to close in towards a centre as the vender mounts the stand. The bell, with the sharp clanking sound, rings their funeral knell; they startle, as with terror; they listen with subdued anxiety; they wait the result in painful suspense. How little we would recognise the picture from abroad. The vender, an amiable gentleman dressed in modest black, and whose cheerful countenance, graced with the blandest smile, betokens the antipodes of his inhuman traffic, holding his hat in his left hand, and a long paper in his right, makes an obsequious bow to those who have honoured him with their company. He views them for a few moments, smiles, casts his eye over the paper again,—it sets forth age and quality—and then at his marketable people. The invoice is complete; the goods correspond exactly. The texture and quality have been appraised by good judges. Being specified, he commences reading the summons and writs, and concludes with other preliminaries of the sale.

"Now, gentlemen," says Mr. Forshou, for such is his name, as he adjusts his hat, lays the document on the desk at his right hand, pulls up the point of his shirt-collar,

sets his neatly-trimmed whiskers a point forward, and smooths his well-oiled hair: "We—will—proceed—with —the—sale—of this lot of negroes, according to the directions of the sheriff of the county. And if no restrictions are imposed, gentlemen can make their selection of old or young to suit their choice or necessities! Gentlemen, however, will be expected to pay for separating." Mr. Forshou, by way of interpolation, reminds his friends that, seeing many of his very best customers present, he expects sharp and healthy bids. He will further remind them (smiling and fretting his hands, as if to show the number of diamond rings he can afford to wear), that the property has been well raised, is well known, and ranges from the brightest and most interesting, to the commonest black field hand. "Yes, gentlemen," he adds, "by the fortune of this unfortunate sale we can accommodate you with anything in the line of negro property. We can sell you a Church and a preacher—a dance-house and a fiddler—a cook and an oyster-shop. Anything! All sold for no fault; and warranted as sound as a roach. The honourable sheriff will gives titles (that functionary being present signifies his willingness), and every man purchasing is expected to have his shiners ready, so that he can plunk down cash in ten days. I need not recount the circumstances under which this property is offered for sale; it is enough to say that it is offered; but, let me say, gentlemen, to enlarge upon it would be painful to my feelings. I will merely read the schedule, and, after selling the people, put up the oxen, mules, and farming utensils." Mr. Forshou, with easy contentment, takes up the list and reads at the top of his voice. The names of heads of families are

announced one by one; they answer the call promptly. He continues till he reaches Annette and Nicholas, and here he pauses for a few moments, turning from the paper to them, as if he one minute saw them on the paper and the next on the floor. "Here, gentlemen," he ejaculates, in a half guttural voice (something he could not account for touched his conscience at the moment), holding the paper nearer his eye-glass, "there is two bits of property bordering on the sublime. It dazzles—seems almost too interesting to sell. It makes a feller's heart feel as if it warn't stuck in the right place." Mr. Forshou casts another irresistible look at the children; his countenance changes; he says he s very sensitive, and shows it in his blushes. He might have saved his blushes for the benefit of the State. The State is careful of its blushes; it has none to sell—none to bestow on a child's sorrow!

Annette returns his somewhat touching manifestation of remorse with a childlike smile.

"Well! I reckon how folks is gettin' tenderish, now a' days. Who'd thought the major had such touchy kind a' feelins? Anything wrong just about yer goggler?" interrupts Romescos, giving the vender a quizzical look, and a "half-way wink." Then, setting his slouch hat on an extra poise, he contorts his face into a dozen grimaces. "Keep conscience down, and strike up trade," he says, very coolly, drawing a large piece of tobacco from his breast-pocket and filling his mouth to its utmost capacity.

"Feelings are over all things," responds the sheriff, who stands by, and will speak for the vender, who is less accustomed to speaking for himself. "Feelings bring up

recollections of things one never thought of before,—of the happiest days of our happiest home. 'Tain't much, no, nothing at all, to sell regular black and coloured property; but there's a sort of cross-grained mythology about the business when it comes to selling such clear grain as this."

The vender relieves the honourable sheriff from all further display of sympathy, by saying that he feels the truth of all the honourable and learned gentleman has said, "which has 'most made the inward virtue of his heart come right up." He leans over the desk, extends his hand, helps himself to a generous piece of Romescos' tobacco.

Romescos rejoins in a subdued voice—"He thinks a man what loves dimes like the major cannot be modest in nigger business, because modesty ain't trade commodity. It cannot be; the man who thinks of such nonsense should sell out—should go north and join the humane society. Folks are all saints, he feels sure, down north yander; wouldn't sell nigger property;—they only send south right smart preachers to keep up the dignity of the institution; to do the peculiar religion of the very peculiar institution. No objection to that; nor hain't no objection to their feelin' bad about the poor niggers, so long as they like our cash and take our cotton. That's where the pin's drove in; while it hangs they wouldn't be bad friends with us for the world."

"You may, Mr. Romescos, suspend your remarks," says the vender, looking indignant, as he thrusts his right hand into his bosom, and attempts a word of introduction.

Romescos must have his last word; he never says die while he has a word at hand. "The major's love must be

credited, gentlemen; he's a modest auctioneer,—a gentleman what don't feel just right when white property's for sale," he whispers, sarcastically.

Another pause, then a hearty laughing, and the man commences to sell his people. He has uttered but a few words, when Marston's attorney, stepping into the centre of the ring, and near the vender, draws a paper from his pocket, and commences reading in a loud tone. It is a copy of the notice he had previously served on the sheriff, setting forth in legal phraseology the freedom of the children, "And therfo'h this is t' stay proceedings until further orders from the honourable Court of Common Pleas," is audible at the conclusion. The company are not much surprised. There is not much to be surprised at, when slave law and common law come in contact. With Marston's sudden decline and unfathomable connection with Graspum, there is nothing left to make the reading of the notice interesting.

"You hear this, gentlemen?" says the vender, biting his lips: "the sale of this very interesting portion of this very interesting property is objected to by the attorney for the defendant at law. They must, therefore, be remanded to the custody of the sheriff, to await the decision of court." That court of strange judgments! The sheriff, that wonderful medium of slaveocratic power, comes forward, muttering a word of consolation; he will take them away. He passes them over to an attendant, who conducts them to their dark chilly cells.

"All right!" says Graspum, moving aside to let the children pass out. "No more than might have been expected; it's no use, though. Marston will settle that

little affair in a very quiet way." He gives the man-vender a look of approval; the very celebrated Mr. Graspum has self-confidence enough for "six folks what don't deal in niggers." A bystander touching him on the arm, he gives his head a cunning shake, crooks his finger on his red nose. "Just a thing of that kind," he whispers, making some very delicate legal gesticulations with the fore-finger of his right hand in the palm of his left; then, with great gravity, he discusses some very nice points of nigger law. He is heard to say it will only be a waste of time, and make some profitable rascality for the lawyers. He could have settled the whole on't in seven minutes. "Better give them up honourably, and let them be sold with the rest. Property's property all over the world; and we must abide by the laws, or what's the good of the constitution? To feel bad about one's own folly! The idea of taking advantage of it at this late hour won't hold good in law. How contemptibly silly! men feeling fatherly after they have made property of their own children! Poor, conscientious fools, how they whine at times, never thinking how they would let their womanish feelings cheat their creditors. There's no honour in that."

"Gentlemen!" interrupts the vender, "we have had enough discussion, moral, legal, and otherwise. We will now have some selling."

The honourable sheriff desires to say a word or two upon points not yet advanced. "The sheriff! the sheriff!" is exclaimed by several voices. He speaks, having first adjusted his spectacles, and relieved himself of three troublesome coughs. "The institution—I mean, gentlemen, the peculiar institution—must be preserved; we cannot, must

not, violate statutes to accommodate good-feeling people. My friend Graspum is right, bob and sinker; we'd get ourselves into an everlasting snarl, if we did. I am done!" The sheriff withdraws his spectacles, places them very carefully in a little case, wipes his mouth modestly, and walks away humming an air.

"Now, gentlemen," says the vender, bristling with renewed animation, "seeing how you've all recovered from a small shock of conscience, we will commence the sale."

Aunt Rachel is now placed upon the stand. Her huge portions, cleanly appearance—Auntie has got her bandana tied with exquisite knot—and very motherly countenance excite general admiration, as on an elevated stand she looms up before her audience. Mr. Forshou, the very gentlemanly vender, taking up the paper, proceeds to describe Aunt Rachel's qualities, according to the style and manner of a celebrated race-horse. Auntie doesn't like this,—her dignity is touched; she honours him with an angry frown. Then she appeals to the amiable gentleman; "come, mas'r, sell 'um quick; don' hab no nonsense wid dis child! Sell 'um to some mas'r what make I housekeeper. Old mas'r,—good old Boss,—know I fus' rate at dat. Let 'um done gone, mas'r, fo'h soon." Rachel is decidedly opposed to long drawn-out humbuggery.

The bids now commence; Rachel, in mute anxiety, tremblingly watches the lips they fall from.

"Give you a first best title to this ar' old critter, gentlemen!" says the vender, affecting much dignity, as he holds up his baton of the trade in flesh. Anybody wanting a good old mother on a plantation where little niggers are raised will find the thing in the old institution before you.

The value is not so much in the size of her, as in her glorious disposition." Aunt Rachel makes three or four turns, like a peacock on a pedestal, to amuse her admirers. Again, Mr. Wormlock intimates, in a tone that the vender may hear, that she has some grit, for he sees it in her demeanour, which is assuming the tragic. Her eyes, as she turns, rest upon the crispy face of Romescos. She views him for a few moments—she fears he will become her purchaser. Her lip curls with contempt, as she turns from his gaze and recognises an old acquaintance, whom she at once singles out, accosts and invites beseechingly to be her purchaser, "to save her from dat man!" She points to Romescos.

Her friend shakes his head unwillingly. Fearing he may become an object of derision, he will not come forward. Poor old slave! faithful from her childhood up, she has reached an age where few find it profitable to listen to her supplications. The black veil of slavery has shut out the past good of her life,—all her faithfulness has gone for nothing; she has passed into that channel where only the man-dealer seeks her for the few dollars worth of labour left in a once powerful body. Oh! valuable remnant of a life, how soon it may be exhausted—forgotten!

Bidders have some doubts about the amount of labour she can yet perform; and, after much manifest hesitancy, she is knocked down to Romescos for the sum of two hundred and seventy dollars. "There! 'tain't a bad price for ye, nohow!" says the vender, laconically. "Get down, old woman." Rachel moves to the steps, and is received by Romescos, who, taking his purchase by the arm, very mechanically sets it on one side. "Come, Auntie, we'll make

a corn-cracker a' you, until such time as we can put yer old bones in trim to send south. Generousness, ye see, made me gin more nor ye war' worth (not much work in ye when ye take it on the square); but a feller what understands the trimmin' a' niggers like I can do ye up young, and put an honest face on while he's cheatin' some green chap with yer old bones." Romescos, very clever in his profession, is not quite sure that his newly-purchased property will "stay put." He turns about suddenly, approaches Rachel (crouched in a corner), mumbling over some incomprehensible jargon, evidently very much disturbed in her feelings, saying, "I kind a' think I see devil in yer eye, old woman." Rachel turns her head aside, but makes no answer. Mr. Romescos will make everything certain; so, drawing a cord, similar to a small sized clothes line, from his pocket, she holds up her hands at his bidding: he winds it several times round her wrists, then ties it securely. "The property's all safe now," he whispers, and returns to attend the bidding arrangements.

One by one—mothers, fathers, and single property, old and young, as may be—are put upon the stand; sold for the various uses of manifest democracy. Harry,—the thinking property, whose sense-keeping has betrayed the philosophy of profound democracy,—is a preacher, and, by the value of his theological capacity, attracts more than ordinary attention. But his life has been a failure,—a mere experiment in divinity struggling with the sensitive power of model democracy. He now seems impatient to know that doom to which the freedom of an enlightened age has consigned him. One minute some cheering hope of his getting a good master presents itself in a familiar face; then it turns away,

and with it vanishes his hope. Another comes forward, but it is merely to view his fine proportions.

Harry has feelings, and is strongly inclined to cling to the opinion that those who know his character and talents will be inclined to purchase. Will they save him from the cruelties of ordinary plantation life?

"Now for the preacher! (Mr. Forshou touches his hat, politely.) Gentlemen purchasing, and wanting a church, can be accommodated with that article to-morrow. Come, boy, mount up here!" The preaching article draws his steps reluctantly, gets up, and there stands,—a black divine: anybody may look at him, anybody may examine him, anybody may kick him; anybody may buy him, body, soul, and theology. How pleasing, how charmingly liberal, is the democracy that grants the sweet privilege of doing all these things! Harry has a few simple requests to make, which his black sense might have told him the democracy could not grant. He requests (referring to his position as a minister of the gospel) that good master—the vender—will sell him with his poor old woman, and that he do not separate him from his dear children. In support of his appeal he sets forth, in language that would be impressive were it from white lips, that he wants to teach his little ones in the ways of the Lord. "Do, mas'r! try sell us so we live together, where my heart can feel and my eyes see my children," he concludes, pointing to his children (living emblems of an oppressed race), who, with his hapless wife, are brought forward and placed on the stand at his feet. Harry (the vender pausing a moment) reaches out his hand (that hand so feared and yet so harmless), and affectionately places it on the head of his youngest child; then, taking it

up, he places it in the arms of his wife,—perhaps not long to be so,—who stands trembling and sobbing at his side. Behold how picturesque is the fruit of democracy! Three small children, clinging round the skirts of a mother's garment, casting sly peeps at purchasers as if they had an instinctive knowledge of their fate. They must be sold for the satisfaction of sundry debts held by sundry democratic creditors. How we affect to scorn the tyranny of Russia, because of her serfdom! Would to God there were truth and virtue in the scorn!

Mr. Forshou, the very sensitive and gentlemanly vender (he has dropped the title of honourable, which being a member of the State senate gave him), takes Harry by the right hand, and leads him round, where, at the front of the tribune, customers may have a much better opportunity of seeing for themselves.

"Yes! he's a swell,—a right good fellow." Mr. Forshou turns to his schedule, glancing his eye up and down. "I see; it's put down here in the invoice: a minister,—warranted sound in every respect. It does seem to me, gentlemen, that here's a right smart chance for a planter who 'tends to the pious of his niggers, giving them a little preaching once in a while. Now, let the generous move; shake your dimes; let us turn a point, and see what can be done in the way of selling the lot,—preacher, wife, and family. The boy, Harry, is a preacher by nature; has by some unknown process tumbled into the profession. He's a methodist, I reckon! But there's choice field property in him; and his wife, one of the primest wenches in the gang, never says die when there's plenty of cotton to pick. As for the young uns, they are pure stock. You must remember,

gentlemen, preachers are not in the market every day; and when one's to be got that'll preach the right stripe, there's no knowing the value of him——"

"We don't want so much of this," interrupts a voice in the crowd.

"Rather anxious to buy the feller," Mr. Forshou replies, affecting much indifference. He will say a few words more. "Think the matter over, upon strict principles of political economy, and you'll find, gentlemen, he's just the article for big planters. I am happy to see the calm and serene faces of three of my friends of the clergy present; will they not take an interest for a fellow-worker in a righteous cause?" The vender smiles, seems inclined to jocularity, to which the gentlemen in black are unwilling to submit. They have not been moving among dealers, and examining a piece of property here and there, with any sinecure motive. They view the vender's remarks as exceedingly offensive, return a look of indignation, and slowly, as if with wounded piety, walk away. The gentlemen in black are most sensitive when any comparison is made between them and a black brother. How shockingly shocked they seem, as, with white neckerchiefs so modest, they look back as they merge from the mart into the street!

It is a question whether these sensitive divines were shocked at the affectation and cold indifference manifested by legitimate dealers, or at the vender's very impertinent remarks. We will not charge aught against our brethren of the clergy: no, we will leave the question open to the reader. We love them as good men who might labour for a better cause; we will leave them valiant defenders of southern chivalry, southern generosity, southern affability.

and southern injustice. To be offended at so small an affair as selling a brother clergyman,—to make the insinuation that they are not humane cause of insult,—is, indeed, the very essence of absurdity.

The vender makes a few side-motions with his thumbs, winks to several of his customers, and gives a significant nod, as the gentlemen in black pass out of the insulting establishment. "Well, gentlemen, I'm sorry if I've offended anybody; but there's a deep-rooted principle in what I've said, nor do I think it christian for the clergy to clear out in that shape. However, God bless 'em; let 'em go on their way rejoicing. Here's the boy (he turns and puts his hand kindly on Harry's shoulder) and his wench, and his young uns,—a minister and family, put down in the invoice as genuine prime. Our worthy sheriff's a good judge of deacons (the sheriff—high functionary—acknowledges the compliment by respectfully nodding), and my opinion is that the boy'll make a good bishop yet: he only wants an apron and a fair showing," He touches Harry under the chin, laughing heartily the while.

"Yes, master," replies Harry (he has little of the negro accent), quieting his feelings; "what I larn is all from the Bible, while master slept. Sell my old woman and little ones with me; my heart is in their welfare——"

"Don't trifle with the poor fellow's feelings; put him up and sell him to the best advantage. There's nobody here that wants a preacher and family. It's only depreciating the value of the property to sell it in the lot," says Graspum, in a firm voice. He has been standing as unmoved as a stoic, seeing nothing but property in the wretch of a clergy-

man, whose natural affections, pictured in his imploring looks, might have touched some tender chord of his feelings.

After several attempts, it is found impossible to sell the minister and his family in one lot. Hence, by the force of necessity, his agonising beseechings pouring forth, he is put up like other single bales of merchandise, and sold to Mr. M'Fadden, of A—— district. The minister brought eleven hundred dollars, ready money down! The purchaser is a well-known planter; he has worked his way up in the world, is a rigid disciplinarian, measuring the square inches of labour in his property, and adapting the best process of bringing it all out.

"He's all I want," says M'Fadden, making a move outward, and edging his way through the crowd.

"A moment with my poor old woman, master, if you please?" says Harry, turning round to his wife.

"None of your black humbugging; there's wives enough on my place, and a parson can have his choice out of fifty," returns M'Fadden, dragging him along by the arm. The scene that here ensues is harrowing in the extreme. The cries and sobs of children,—the solicitude and affection of his poor wife, as she throws her arms about her husband's neck,—his falling tears of sorrow, as one by one he snatches up his children and kisses them,—are painfully touching. It is the purest, simplest, holiest of love, gushing forth from nature's fountain. It were well if we could but cherish its heavenly worth. That woman, the degraded of a despised race, her arms round a fond husband's neck, struggling with death-like grasp, and imploring them not to take him from her. The men who have made him mer-

chandise,—who have trodden his race in the dust,—look on unmoved as the unfeeling purchaser drags him from the embrace of all that is near and dear to him on earth. Here, in this boasted freest country the sun shines on —where freedom was bequeathed by our brave forefathers, —where the complex tyranny of an old world was overthrown,—such scenes violate no law. When will the glorious, the happy day of their death come? When shall the land be free?

M'Fadden, having paid the price of his clergyman, drags him to the door. "Once more, master," mutters the victim, looking back with fear and hope pictured on his imploring face. M'Fadden has no patience with such useless implorings, and orders him to move along. "I will see them once more!" the man exclaims, "I will! Good bye! may Heaven bless you on earth, my little ones!—God will protect us when we meet again!" The tears course down his cheeks.

"None of that ar' kind of nonsense! Shut down yer tear-trap," says M'Fadden, calling an attendant, and, drawing a pair of irons from his pocket, placing them about Harry's hands. Mr. M'Fadden's property shows signs of being somewhat belligerent: to obviate any further nonsense, and to make short work of the thing, Mr. M'Fadden calls in aid, throws his property on the ground, ties its legs with a piece of rope, places it upon a drag, and orders it to be conveyed to the depôt, from whence it will be despatched by rail for a new home.

This little ceremony over, the wife and children (Romescos and M'Fadden, not very good friends, were competitors for the preacher property) are put up and sold to Romescos. That skilful and very adroit gentleman

is engaged to do the exciting business of separating, which he is progressing with very coolly and cleverly. The whole scene closes with selling the animal property and farming utensils. Happy Christian brothers are they who would spread the wings of their Christianity over such scenes!

CHAPTER XX.

HOW MY FATHER TRIED TO BE MY FATHER.

If modern Christianity, as improved in our southern world —we mean our world of slavery—had blushes, it might improve the use of them were we to recount in detail the many painful incidents which the improved and very christianly process of separating husbands from wives, parents from children, brothers from sisters, and friends from all the ties and associations the heart gives birth to. Negroes have tender sympathies, strong loves. Reader, we will save your feelings,—we will not recount them; our aim is not to excite undue feeling, but to relate every-day scenes.

Days and weeks pass on drearily with Marston. Unhappy, forlorn, driven to the last extremity by obdurate creditors, he waits the tardy process of the law. He seldom appears in public; for those who professed to be his best friends have become his coldest acquaintances. But he has two friends left,—friends whose pure friendship is like sweetest dew-drops: they are Franconia and Daddy Bob. The rusty old servant is faithful, full of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity; the other is the generous woman, in whose bosom beat the tender impulses of a noble soul. Those impulses have been moved to action in defence of the innocent; they never can be defeated. Bob is poor, abject, and old with toil. He cares not to be free,—he wants

mas'r free. But there yet remains some value in Bob; and he has secreted himself, in hopes of escaping the man-dealer, and sharing his earnings in the support of old mas'r. Franconia is differently situated; yet she can only take advantage of circumstances which yet depend upon the caprice of a subtle-minded husband. Over both these friends of the unfortunate, slavery has stretched its giant arms, confusing the social system, uprooting the integrity of men, weakening respect for law, violating the best precepts of nature, substituting passion for principle, confounding reason, and enslaving public opinion.

Under the above disorganising state of the social compact, the children, known to be Marston's, are pursued as property belonging to the bankrupt estate. When the law has made it such, it must be sold in satisfaction of Marston's debts.

Seven months have passed since they were shut up in a felon's cell. They have been visited by Marston; he has been kind to them,—kind as a father could be under such circumstances. Franconia has not forgotten them: she sends many little things to lighten the gloom of their confinement; but society closes her lips, and will frown upon any disclosure she may make of their parentage. Were she to disclose it to Colonel M'Carstrow, the effect would be doubtful: it might add to the suspicious circumstances already excited against her unfortunate uncle. The paramount question—whether they are hereafter to be chattel slaves, or human beings with inalienable rights—must be submitted to the decision of a judicial tribunal. It is by no means an uncommon case, but very full of interest. It will merely be interesting (not as involving any new question of law, nor presenting new phases of southern juris-

prudence) in showing what very notorious dealers in human kind, and lawyers of great legal ability, can morally and legally perform. It will show how great men figure in the arena of legal degradation, how they unravel the mystery of slave power.

Graspum, professedly uninterested, has purchased the claims, and will pursue the payment in the name of the original plaintiffs. With Romescos's cunning aid, of course the trial will be a perfect farce, the only exception being that the very profound Mr. Graspum will exhibit a degree of great sincerity on his part.

The sessions are sitting; the day for the trial of this important case has arrived; the little dingy court-room is early crowded to excess, but there is not much expression of anxiety. Men speak lightly of the issue, as if some simple game were to be played. The judge, a grave-looking gentleman of no ordinary mien, in whose full countenance sternness is predominant in the well-displayed estimation in which he holds his important self, walks measuredly into court (the lacqueys of the law crying "Court! court!" to which he bows), and takes his seat upon an elevated tribune. There is great solemnity preserved at the opening: the sheriff, with well-ordained costume and sword, sits at his honour's left, his deputy on the right, and the very honourable clerk of the court just below, where there can be no impediment during the process of feeding "the Court" on very legal points of "nigger law." In truth, the solemnity of this court, to those unacquainted with the tenor of legal proceedings at the south, might have been misconstrued for something more in keeping with justice.

The legal gentlemen, most modest of face, are seated

round the bar (a semicircle railing dividing their dignity from the common spectator), waiting the reading of the docket. The clerk takes his time about that, and seems a great favourite with the spectators, who applaud his rising. He reads, the sheriff crying "order! order!" while the judge learnedly examines his notes. Some consultation takes place between several of the attorneys, which is interlarded with remarks from the judge, who, with seeming satisfaction to all parties, orders the case of B. C. R. K. Marston's writ of replevin to be called and proceeded with. "As there are three *fi fas*," says the junior attorney for the defendants, a very lean strippling of the law, just working his way up in the world, "I object to the manner of procedure; the case only involves a question of law, and should be submitted to the special decision of the Court. It is not a matter for a jury to decide upon," he concludes. The judge has listened to his remarks, objections, and disclaimers, with marked attention; nevertheless, he is compelled to overrule them, and order the case to proceed. Upon this it is agreed among the attorneys—happy fellows, always ready to agree or disagree—that a decision taken upon one *fi fa* shall be held as establishing a decision for all the cases at issue.

The children are now brought into Court, and seated near one of the attorneys. Marston stands, almost motionless, a few steps back, gazing upon them as intently and solicitously as if the issue were life or death. Deacon Rosebrook, his good lady, and Franconia, have been summoned as witnesses, and sit by the side of each other on a bench within the bar. We hear a voice here and there among the crowd of spectators expressing sympathy for the children; others say they are only "niggers," and can't be aught else, if it be

proved that Marston bought the mother. And there is Mr. Scranton! He is well seated among the gentlemen of the legal profession, for whom he has a strong fellow feeling. He sits, unmoved, in his wonted moodiness; now and then he gives the children a sly look of commiseration, as if the screws of his feelings were unloosing. They (the little property) look so interesting, so innocent, so worthy of being something more than merchandise in a land of liberty, that Mr. Scranton's heart has become irresistibly softened. It gets a few degrees above Mr. Scranton's constitutional scruples. "Painful affair this! What do you think of it, Mr. Scranton?" enquires a member of the profession, touching his arm.

"It is the fruit of Marston's weakness, you see!—don't feel just straight, I reckon. Didn't understand the philosophy of the law, neither; and finds himself pinched up by a sort of humanity that won't pass for a legal tender in business——"

"Ah! we cannot always look into the future," interrupts the attorney.

Mr. Scranton holds that whatever is constitutional must be right and abidable; that one's feelings never should joggle our better understanding when these little curiosities come in the way. He admits, however, that they are strange attendants coming up once in a while, like the fluctuations of an occult science. With him, the constitution gives an indisputable right to overlook every outrage upon natural law; and, while it exists in full force, though it may strip one half the human race of rights, he has no right to complain so long as it does not interfere with him. It strikes Mr. Scranton that people who differ with him in opinion must

have been educated under the teaching of a bad philosophy. Great governments, he holds, often nurture the greatest errors. It matters not how much they feel their magnitude; often, the more they do, the least inclined are they to correct them. Others fear the constitutional structure so much, that they stand trembling lest the slightest correction totter it to the ground. Great governments, too, are most likely to stand on small points when these errors are pointed out. Mr. Scranton declares, with great emphasis, that all these things are most legally true, perfectly natural: they follow in man as well as governments.

With all due deference to Mr. Scranton's opinion, so much demanded among his admiring neighbours, it must be said that he never could bring his mind to understand the difference between natural philosophy and his own constitutional scruples, and was very apt to commit himself in argument, forgetting that the evil was in the fruits of a bad system, bringing disgrace upon his countrymen, corrupting the moral foundation of society, spreading vice around the domestic fireside, and giving to base minded men power to speculate in the foulness of their own crimes.

The case is opened by the attorney for the plaintiff, who makes a great many direct and indirect remarks, and then calls witnesses. "Marco Graspum!" the clerk exclaims. That gentleman comes forward, takes his place, calmly, upon the witnesses' stand. At first he affects to know but little; then suddenly remembers that he has heard Marston call their mothers property. Further, he has heard him, while extolling their qualities, state the purchase to have been made of one Silenus, a trader.

"He stated—be sure now!—to you, that he purchased

them of one Silenus, a trader?" interpolates the judge, raising his glasses, and advancing his ear, with his hand raised at its side.

"Yes, yer honour!" "Please observe this testimony," rejoins the attorney, quickly. He bows; says that is enough. The opposing attorney has no question to put on cross-examination: he knows Graspum too well. Being quite at home with the gentlemen of the legal profession, they know his cool nonchalance never can be shaken upon a point of testimony.

"Any questions to put?" asks the legal opponent, with an air of indifference.

"No, nothing," is the reply.

His brother of special pleas smiles, gives a cunning glance at Graspum, and wipes his face with a very white handkerchief. He is conscious of the character of his man; it saves all further trouble. "When we know who we have to deal with, we know how to deal," he mutters, as he sits down.

Graspum retires from the stand, and takes his seat among the witnesses. "We will now call Anthony Romescos," says the attorney. A few minutes' pause, and that individual rolls out in all his independence, takes his place on the stand. He goes through a long series of questioning and cross-questioning, answers for which he seems to have well studied.

The whole amounts to nothing more than a corroboration of Graspum's testimony. He has heard Marston call their mothers property: once, he thinks, but would hesitate before pledging his honour, that Marston offered to him the woman Clotilda. Yes; it was her!

Considerable excitement is now apparent; the auditory whisper among themselves, attorneys put their heads together,

turn and turn over the leaves of their statutes. His honour, the Court, looks wiser still. Marston trembles and turns pale; his soul is pinioned between hope and fear. Romescos has told something more than he knows, and continues, at random, recounting a dozen or more irrelevant things. The court, at length, deems it necessary to stop his voluntary testimony, orders that he only answer such questions as are put to him.

"There's no harm in a feller tellin' what he knows, eh! judge?" returns Romescos, dropping a quid of tobacco at his side, bowing sarcastically to the judge, and drawing his face into a comical picture.

Mr. Romescos is told that he can stand aside. At this seemingly acceptable announcement, he bristles his crispy red hair with his fingers, shrugs his shoulders; winks at two or three of the jurymen, pats Graspum on the shoulder as he passes him, and takes his seat.

"We will close the case here, but reserve the right of introducing further testimony, if necessary," says the learned and very honourable counsel.

The defence here rises, and states the means by which his client intends to prove the freedom of the children; and concludes by calling over the names of the witnesses. Franconia! Franconia! we hear that name called; it sounds high above the others, and falls upon our ear most mournfully. Franconia, that sweet creature of grace and delicacy, brought into a court where the scales of injustice are made to serve iniquity!

Franconia's reserve and modesty put legal gentlemen's gallantry to the test. One looks over the pages of his reports, another casts a sly look as she sweeps by to take that

place the basest of men has just left. The interested spectators stretch their portions, anxiously, to get a look at the two pretty children honourable and legal gentlemen are straining their ability to reduce to property. There stands the blushing woman, calm and beautiful, a virtuous rebuke to curious spectators, mercenary slave dealers, the very learned gentlemen of the bar, and his enthroned honour, the Court! She will give testimony that makes nature frown at its own degradation. Not far from Franconia sits the very constitutional Mr. Scranton, casting side glances now and then. Our philosopher certainly thinks, though he will not admit it, the chivalry is overtaxing itself; there was no occasion for compelling so fair a creature to come into court, and hear base testimony before a base crowd,—to aid a base law in securing base ends. And then, just think and blush, ye who have blushes to spare.

Will the learned gentleman proceed with the examination of this witness?" says his honour, who, pen in hand, has been waiting several minutes to take down her testimony. Court and audience, without knowing why, have come to an unconscious pause.

"Will the witness state to the court in what relation she stands to the gentleman who defends the freedom of the children,—Mr. Hugh Marston?" says the attorney, addressing his bland words to Franconia, somewhat nervously.

"He—he—he—is my ——," she mutters, and stops. Her face turns pale; then suddenly changes to glowing crimson. She rests her left hand on the rail, while the judge, as if suddenly moved by a generous impulse, suggests that the attorney pause a moment, until the deputy provides a chair for the lady. She is quiet again. Calmly and modestly, as

her soft, meaning eyes wander over the scene before her, compelled to encounter its piercing gaze, the crystal tears leave their wet courses on her blushing cheeks. Her feelings are too delicate, too sensitive, to withstand the sharp and deadly poison of *liberty's* framework of black laws. She sees her uncle, so kind, so fond of her and her absent brother; her eye meets his in kindred sympathy, imagination wings its way through recollections of the past, draws forth its pleasures with touching sensations, and fills the cup too full. That cup is the fountain of the soul, from which trouble draws its draughts. She watches her uncle as he turns toward the children; she knows they are his; she feels how much he loves them.

The attorney (the man of duty) is somewhat affected. "I have a duty to perform," he says, looking at the court, at the witness, at the children, at the very red-faced clerk, at the opposing counsel, and anything within the precincts of the court-room. We see his lips move; he hesitates, makes slight gesticulations, turns and turns a volume of Blackstone with his hands, and mutters something we cannot understand. The devil is doing battle with his heart—a heart bound with the iron strings of the black law. At length, in broken accents, we catch the following remarks, which the learned gentleman thinks it necessary to make in order to save his gallantry:— "I am sorry—extremely sorry, to see the witness, a lady so touchingly sensitive, somewhat affected; but, nevertheless (the gentleman bows to the judge, and says the Court will understand his position!) it is one of those cases which the demands of the profession at times find us engaged in. As such we are bound, morally, let me say, as well as legally, to protect the interests of our clients. In doing so, we are

often compelled to encounter those delicate irregularities to which the laws governing our peculiar institutions are liable. I may say that they are so interwoven with our peculiar institution, that to act in accordance with our duty makes it a painful task to our feelings. We—(I may appeal to the court for corroboration) can scarcely pursue an analysation of these cases without pain; I may say, remorse of conscience." Mr. Petterwester, for such is his name, is evidently touched with that sense of shame which the disclosures of the black system bring upon his profession. This is aided by the fascinating appearance of the witness on the stand. It is irresistible because it is at variance with those legal proceedings, those horrors of southern jurisprudence, which he is pressing for the benefit of his clients. Again he attempts to put another question, but is seized with a tremor; he blushes, is nervous and confused, casts a doubting look at the judge. That functionary is indeed very grave—unmoved. The responsibility of the peculiar institution sorely hardened the war of heart against head that was waging among the learned gentlemen; but the institution must be preserved, for its political power works wonders, and its legal power is wondrously curious. "Please tell the court and jury what you know about the relation in which these children stand to the gentleman who asserts their freedom, dear madam? We will not trouble you with questions; make a statement," says Mr. Petterwester, with great sincerity of manner. Indeed, Mr. Petterwester has been highly spoken of among the very oldest, most respectable, and best kind of female society, for his gallantry.

The brother opposite, a small gentleman, with an exceedingly studious countenance, dressed in shining black, and a

profusion of glossy hair falling upon his shoulders, rises with great legal calmness, and objects to the manner of procedure, describing it as contrary to the well-established rules of the bar. The court interpolates a few remarks, and then intimates that it very seriously thinks gentlemen better waive the points,—better come to an understanding to let the lady make her statements! Courtesy entitles her, as a lady, to every respect and consideration. The gentlemen, having whispered a few words together, bow assent to the high functionary's intimation.

Franconia proceeds. She asserts that Hugh Marston (pointing to him) is her uncle; that she knows little or nothing of his business affairs, cannot tell why her brother left the country so suddenly; she knew Clotilda and Ellen Juvarne, mothers of the children. They never were considered among the property of the plantation. Her short story is told in touching tones. The learned and gallant attorney, esteeming it indispensable, puts a question or two as to whether anything was ever said about selling them in consequence of certain jealousies. Before the brother can object, she answers them evasively, and the testimony amounts to just no testimony at all. The court, bowing respectfully, informs the lady she can get down from the stand.

The next witness called is Mrs. Rosebrook. This good and benevolent lady is more resolute and determined. The gentlemen of the bar find her quite clever enough for them. Approaching the stand with a firm step, she takes her place as if determined upon rescuing the children. Her answers come rather faster than is compatible with the dignity of the learned gentlemen of the bar. She knows Marston,

knows Franconia, knows the old plantation, has spent many happy hours upon it, is sorry to see the old proprietor reduced to this state of things. She knows the two children,—dear creatures,—has always had a kindly feeling for them; knew their poor mothers, has befriended them since Marston's troubles began. She always (her large, loving eyes glowing with the kindness of her soul) heard Marston say they were just as free as people could be, and they should be free, too! Some people did'nt look at the moral obligation of the thing. Here, the good lady, blushing, draws the veil over her face. There is something more she would like to disclose if modesty did not forbid.

"Nothing direct in such testimony, your honour will perceive!" says Mr. Petterwester, directing himself to the judge.

"Is there any question with regard to the father of the children?" enquires his honour, again placing his hand to his ear and leaning forward inquisitively. His honour suddenly forgot himself.

"Ah, ha'h, he—em! The question, so buried under a mountain of complexity, requires very nice legal discrimination to define it properly. However, we must be governed by distinct pleadings, and I think that, in this case, this specific question is not material; nor do my brother colleagues of the Bench think it would be advisable to establish such questions, lest they affect the moral purity of the atmosphere we live in."

"If your honour will permit it, I may say it will only be necessary in this case to establish the fact of property existing in the mothers. That will settle the whole question; fathers, as you are aware, not being embraced in the law

regulating this species of property;" the learned gentleman instructs the court.

His honour, rejoining with a few very grave and very legal remarks, says they look very much alike, and are of one mother. He is a little undecided, however, takes another good stare at them, and then adds his glasses, that the affinity may be more clear. Turning again to his book, he examines his pages, vacantly. A legal wag, who has been watching the trial for mere amusement, whispering in the ear of his brother, insinuates that the presiding functionary is meditating some problem of speculation, and has forgotten the point at issue.

"No!" interrupts Mr. Petterwester, "your honour is curiously labouring under an error; they have two mothers, both of the same tenour in life—that is (Mr. Petterwester corrects himself) embodying the same questions of property. The issue of the case now on is taken as final over the rest."

"Ah! bless me, now—I—rather—see—into it. The clerk will hand me Cobb's Georgia Reports. A late case, curiously serious, there recorded, may lead me to gather a parallel. Believe me, gentlemen, my feelings are not so dead (his honour addresses himself to the bar in general), that I cannot perceive it to be one of those very delicate necessities of our law which so embarrasses the gallantry of the profession at times——"

"Yes! yer honour," the attorney for the defence suddenly interrupts, "and which renders it no less a disgrace to drag ladies of high rank into a court of this kind——."

His honour can assure the learned gentleman that this court has very high functions, and can administer justice

equal to anything this side of divine power,—his honour interrupts, indignantly.

"The court misunderstood the counsel,—he had no reference to the unquestioned high authority of the tribunal; it was only the character of the trials brought before it. When, notwithstanding our boasts of chivalry, delicate ladies are dragged before it in this manner, they must not only endure the painful tenour of the evidence, but submit to the insolence of men who would plunder nature of its right——"

"I shall claim the protection of the court against such unprofessional imputations," his brother of the opposite interrupts, rising and affecting an air of indignation. The court, quite bewildered, turns a listening ear to his remarks— "Hopes the learned gentlemen will not disgrace themselves."

Order! order! order! demands the sheriff, making a flourish with his sword. The spectators, rising on tip-toe, express their anxiety to have the case proceed. They whisper, shake their heads, and are heard to say that it will be utterly useless to attempt anything against the testimony of Graspum and Romescos. Mr. Graspum, in the fulness of his slavish and impudent pedantry, feeling secure in the possession of his victims, sits within the bar, seeming to feel his position elevated a few degrees above his highness the judge.

"I do hope the interposition of this Court will not be necessary in this case. Gentlemen of the learned profession should settle those differences more like gentlemen," says his honour, looking down upon his minions with a frown of contempt.

"The matter is one entirely of a professional nature, yer honour!" responds the scion of the law, quickly, first

addressing himself to the judge, and then to the jury. "If the testimony we have already adduced—direct as it is—be not sufficient to establish the existence of property in these children (Romescos has just whispered something in his ear) we will produce other testimony of the most conclusive character. However, we will yield all further cross-questioning the ladies; and I now suggest that they be relieved from the painful position of appearing before this court again.

Mrs. Rosebrook descends from the stand amidst murmurs and applause. Some amount of legal tact now ensues; the attorney for the prosecution displays an earnestness amounting to personal interest.

Here the counsel for the defence steps forward, whispers to the clerk, and gives notice that he shall call witnesses to impeach the characters of Graspum and Romescos. These two high dignitaries, sitting together, express the utmost surprise at such an insinuation. The character of neither is sacred material, nor will it stand even in a southern atmosphere. They have been pronounced legally impure many years ago.

Just at this juncture there is quite an excitement in the court-room. Romescos, like a disfigured statue, rises from among his legal friends and addresses the court on the independent principle. "Well now, Squire, if ya'r goin' to play that ar' lawyer game on a feller what don't understand the dodge, I'll just put a settler on't; I'll put a settler on't what ya' won't get over. My word's my honour; didn't come into this establishment to do swarin' cos I wanted to; seein' how, when a feller's summoned by the Boss Squire, he's got to walk up and tell the truth and nothin' shorter.

I knows ya' don't feel right about it; and it kind a hurts a feller's feelins to make property of such nice young uns, especially when one knows how nice they've been brought up. This aint the thing, though; 'taint the way to get along in the world; and seein' I'm a man of honour, and wouldn't do a crooked thing nohow—"

His honour the Sheriff, being somewhat impressed with the fact that Mr. Romescos is rather transgressing the rules of the court, interposes. His defence of his honour cannot longer be tolerated; and yet, very much after the fashion of great outlaws, who, when arraigned for their crimes, think themselves very badly used men, Romescos has the most exalted opinion of himself; never for a moment entertains a doubt of his own integrity.

He reaches over the bar; places his lips to the attorney's ear; is about to whisper something. That gentleman quickly draws back, as if his presence were repulsive. Not the least offended, Romescos winks significantly, crooks the fore-finger of his right hand, and says—"something that'll put the stopper on." The legal gentleman seems reconciled; listens attentively to the important information. "All right! nothing more is needed," he says, rising from his seat, and asking permission to introduce proof which will render it quite unnecessary to proceed with anything that may have for its object the impeachment of the witnesses.

The attorney for the defence objects to this mode of procedure; and the judge, having sustained the objections, orders the counsel to proceed with his witnesses. Several persons, said to be of very high standing, are now called. They successively depose that they would not be-

lieve Romescos nor Graspum upon oath; notwithstanding, both may be very honourable and respectable gentlemen. Thus invalidating the testimony of these high functionaries of the peculiar institution, the gentleman of the prosecution has an opportunity of producing his conclusive proof. Romescos has been seen passing him a very suspicious-looking document.

All attention is now directed to the children; they sit pensively, unconscious of the dread fate hanging over them. "What can this testimony be?" rings in whispers about the court-room. Some deep intrigue is going on; it is some unforeseen movement of the slave-dealers, not comprehended by the spectators. Can the *boná-fide* creditors be implicated? Even Mr. Scranton feels that his knowledge of the philosophy of slave power is completely at fault.

"Now, your honour, and gentlemen of the jury," says the gentleman of the prosecution, "I am fully aware of the painful suspense in which this case has kept the court, the jury, and the very respectable persons I see assembled; but, notwithstanding the respectability and well-known position of my clients and witnesses, the defence in this case has succeeded in expunging the testimony, and compelling us to bring forward such proof as cannot be impeached." Here the legal gentleman draws from his pocket a stained and coloured paper, saying, "Will the gentlemen of the jury be kind enough to minutely examine that instrument." He passes it to the foreman.

"What is the purport of the instrument?" his honour enquires.

"The bill of sale, your honour."

Foreman has examined it satisfactorily; passes it to

everal of his fellows. All are satisfied. He returns it to the learned gentleman. That very important and chivalrous individual throws it upon the table with great self-confidence.

His honour would like to scan over its details. It is passed to the little fat clerk, and by that gentleman to his honour. "Very, singularly strong!" his honour says, giving his head a very wise shake.

"When the court gets through," says the advocate for the defence, rising and placing his hand on the clerk's desk.

"The gentleman can examine," replies the court, passing it coldly to the Sheriff, who politely forwards it.

He turns it and turns it; reads it slowly; examines the dates minutely. "How did the prosecution come in possession of this document?"

His brother of the law objects, "That's not an admissible question. If the defence will institute an action against the parties for unlawfully procuring it, we will take great plea sure in showing our hands. It may be, however, well to say, that Mr. Marston and Mr. Graspum have always been on the most friendly terms; but the former gentleman *forgot* to take care of this very essential document," he continues, taking it from the hand of his professional brother, and turning toward the spectators, his countenance glowing with exultation. The pride of his ambition is served. The profession has honourably sustained itself through the wonderful abilities of this learned brother, who, holding the paper in his hand, awaits the gracious applause of the assembled spectators. There is some applause, some murmuring, much whispering.

The court, in coldly measured words, hopes the audience will evince no excitement *pro* or *con*.

Some persons declare the bill of sale a forgery,—that Romescos has tried that very same trick twice before. Others say it matters but little on that score, - that all the law in the country won't restrain Graspum; if he sets at it in good earnest he can turn any sort of people into property. A third whispers that the present order of things must be changed, or nobody's children will be safe. Legal gentlemen, not interested in the suit, shake their heads, and successively whisper, "The prosecution never came by that bill of sale honestly." Creditors, not parties to *this* suit, and brokers who now and then do something in the trade of human beings, say, "If this be the way Marston's going to play the dodge with his property, we will see if there be not some more under the same shaded protection."

"Will the counsel for the defence permit his client to inspect this instrument?" says the learned gentleman, passing it across the table.

Marston's face flushes with shame; he is overcome; he extends his trembling hand and takes the fatal document. It is, to him, his children's death-warrant. A cloud of darkness overshadows his hopes; he would question the signature, but the signer, Silenus, is dead,—as dead as the justice of the law by which the children are being tried. And there is the bond attached to it! Again the thought flashed through his mind, that he had sold Ellen Juvarne to Elder Pemberton Praiseworthy. However much he might struggle to save his children—however much a father's obligations might force themselves upon him—however much he might acknowledge them the offspring of his

own body, they were property to the law—property in the hands of Graspum; and, with the forethought of that honourable gentleman opposed to him (as it evidently was), his efforts and pleadings would not only prove futile, but tend to expose Lorenzo's crime.

"The philosophy of the thing is coming out, just as I said —precisely," ejaculates Mr. Scranton, raising his methodical eyes, and whispering to a legal gentleman who sits at his right.

"Serious philosophy, that embraces and sanctions the sale of such lovely children,—making property of one's children against their wishes! I'm a great Southern rights man, but this is shaving the intermixture a little too close," rejoins the other, casting a solicitous look at Marston, who has been intently and nervously examining the bill of sale.

"Any objections to make to it?" says the learned gentleman, bowing politely and extending his hand, as he concludes by inquiring how it happened, in the face of such an array of evidence, that he sold the girl, Ellen Juvarne?

"No objection, none!" is Marston's quick response. His head droops; he wipes the tears from his eyes; he leaves the court in silence, amid murmurs from the crowd. The female witnesses left before him; it was well they did so.

That this is the original bill of sale, from one Silenus to Hugh Marston, has been fully established. However painful the issue, nothing remained but to give the case to the jury. All is silent for several minutes. The judge has rarely sat upon a case of this kind. He sits unnerved, the pen in his hand refusing to write as his thoughts wander into the wondrous vortex of the future of slavery. But the spell has passed; his face shades with pallor as slowly he

rises to address the jury. He has but few words to say; they fall like death-knells on the ears of his listeners. Some touching words escape his hesitating lips; but duty, enforced by the iron rod of slave power, demands him to sustain the laws of the land. He sets forth the undisputed evidence contained in the bill of sale, the unmistakeable bond, the singular and very *high-handed* attempt to conceal it from the honest creditors, and the necessity of jurymen restraining their sympathies for the children while performing a duty to the laws of the land. Having thus made his brief address, he sits down; the sheriff shoulders his tip-staff, and the august twelve, with papers provided, are marched into the jury-room, as the court orders that the case of Dunton *v.* Higgins be called.

Five minutes have intervened; the clerk calling the case is interrupted by a knocking at the jury-room door; he stops his reading, the door is opened, and the sheriff conducts his twelve gentlemen back to their seats. Not a whisper is heard; the stillness of the tomb reigns over this high judicial scene. The sheriff receives a packet of papers from the foreman's hands, and passes them to the clerk.

"Gentlemen of the jury will please stand up," says that very amiable functionary. "Have you agreed on your verdict?" The foreman bows assent.

"Guilty or not guilty, gentlemen?"

"Guilty," says the former, in tones like church-yard wailings: "Guilty. I suppose that's the style we must render the verdict in?" The foreman is at a loss to know what style of verdict is necessary.

"Yes," returns the clerk, bowing; and the gentlemen of the jury well complimented by the judge, are discharged

until to-morrow. The attorney for the defence made a noble, generous, and touching appeal to the fatherly twelve; but his appeal fell like dull mist before the majesty of slavery. Guilty! O heavens, that ever the innocent should be made guilty of being born of a mother! That a mother (that name so holy) should be stained with the crime of bearing her child to criminal life!

Two children, fair and beautiful, are judged by a jury of twelve—perhaps all good and kind fathers, free and enlightened citizens of a *free* and happy republic—guilty of the crime of being born of a slave mother. Can this inquiring jury, this thinking twelve, feel as fathers only can feel when their children are on the precipice of danger? Could they but break over that seeming invulnerable power of slavery which crushes humanity, freezes up the souls of men, and makes the lives of millions but a blight of misery, and behold with the honesty of the heart what a picture of misery their voice "Guilty!" spreads before these unfortunate children, how changed would be the result!

A judge, endeared to his own children by the kindest affections, feels no compunction of conscience while administering the law which denies a father his own children—which commands those children to be sold with the beasts of the field! Mark the slender cord upon which the fate of these unfortunates turns; mark the suffering through which they must pass.

The hand on the clock's pale face marks four. His honour reminds gentlemen of the bar that it is time to adjourn court. Court is accordingly adjourned. The crowd disperse in silence. Gentlemen of the legal profession are satisfied the majesty of the law has been sustained.

Hence the guilty children, scions of rights-loving democracy, like two pieces of valuable merchandise judicially decreed upon, are led back to prison, where they will await sale. Annette has caught the sound of "Guilty!" she mutters it while being taken home from the court in the arms of an old slave. May Heaven forgive the guilt we inherit from a mother in this our land of freedom!

CHAPTER XXI.

WE CHANGE WITH FORTUNE.

But a few months have passed since the popularly called gallant M'Carstrow led the fair Franconia to the hymeneal altar; and, now that he has taken up his residence in the city, the excitement of the honeymoon is waning, and he has betaken himself to his more congenial associations. The beautiful Franconia for him had but transient charms, which he now views as he would objects necessary to the gratifications of his coarse passions. His feelings have not been softened with those finer associations which make man the kind patron of domestic life; nor is his mind capable of appreciating that respect for a wife which makes her an ornament of her circle. Saloons, race-courses, and nameless places, have superior attractions for him: home is become but endurable.

In truth, Franconia, compelled to marry in deference to fortune, finds she is ensnared into misfortunes. M'Carstrow (Colonel by courtesy) had fifteen hundred dollars, cash down, to pay for Clotilda: this sad grievance excites his feelings, inasmuch as it was all owing to his wife's whims, and the poverty of her relations. The verdict of the jury, recently rendered, was to his mind a strictly correct one; but he cannot forget the insane manner in which the responsibility was fastened upon him, and the hard cash—which might have

made two handsome stakes on the turf—drawn from his pocket. His wife's poverty-stricken relations he now detests, and can tolerate them best when farthest away from him. But Franconia does not forget that he is her husband; no, night after night she sits at the window until midnight, waiting his return. Feeble and weary with anxiety, she will despatch a negro on a hopeless errand of search; he, true to his charge, returns with the confidential intelligence of finding Mas'r in a place less reputable than it is proper to mention. Such is our southern society,—very hospitable in language, chivalrous in memory,—base in morals! Sometimes the gallant colonel deems it necessary to remain until daylight, lest, in returning by night, the pavement may annoy his understanding. Of this, however, he felt the world knew but little. Now and then, merely to keep up the luxury of southern life, the colonel finds it gratifying to his feelings, on returning home at night, to order a bed to be made for him in one of the yard-houses, in such manner as to give the deepest pain to his Franconia. Coarse and dissolute, indifference follows, cold and cutting; she finds herself a mere instrument of baser purpose in the hands of one she knows only as a ruffian—she loathes! Thus driven under the burden of trouble, she begins to express her unhappiness, to remonstrate against his associations, to plead with him against his course of life. He jeers at this, scouts such prudery, proclaims it far beneath the dignity of his standing as a southern gentleman.

The generous woman could have endured his dissipation—she might have tolerated his licentiousness, but his arbitrary and very uncalled-for remarks upon the misfortunes of her family are more than she can bear. She has tried to respect

him (love him she cannot), and yet her sensitive nature recoils at the thought of being attached to one whose feelings and associations are so at variance with her own. Her impulsive spirit quails under the bitterness of her lot; she sees the dreary waste of trouble before her only to envy the happiness of those days of rural life spent on the old plantation. That she should become fretful and unhappy is a natural consequence.

We must invite the reader to go with us to M'Carstrow's residence, an old-fashioned wooden building, three stories high, with large basement windows and doors, on the south side of King Street. It is a wet, gloomy night, in the month of November,—the wind, fierce and chilling, has just set in from the north-east; a drenching rain begins to fall, the ships in the harbour ride ill at ease; the sudden gusts of wind, sweeping through the narrow streets of the city, lighted here and there by the sickly light of an old-fashioned lamp, bespread the scene with drear. At a second-story window, lighted by a taper burning on the sill, sits Franconia, alone, waiting the return of M'Carstrow. M'Carstrow is enjoying his night orgies! He cares neither for the pelting storm, the anxiety of his wife, nor the sweets of home.

A gust of wind shakes the house; the windows rattle their stormy music; the cricket answers to the wailings of the gale as it gushes through the crevices; Franconia's cares are borne to her husband. Now the wind subsides,—a slow rap is heard at the hall door, in the basement: a female servant, expecting her master, hastens to open it. Her master is not there; the wind has extinguished the flaring light; and the storm, sweeping through the sombre arch, spreads noise and confusion. She runs to the kitchen, seizes the globular

lamp, and soon returns, frightened at the sight presented in the door. Master is not there—it is the lean figure of a strange old "nigger," whose weather-worn face, snowy with beard and wrinkled with age, is lit up with gladness. He has a warm soul within him,—a soul not unacceptable to heaven! The servant shrinks back,—she is frightened at the strange sight of the strange old man. "Don' be feared, good child; Bob ain't bad nigger," says the figure, in a guttural whisper.

"An't da'h fo'h notin good; who is ye'?" returns the girl, holding the globular lamp before her shining black face. Cautiously she makes a step or two forward, squinting at the sombre figure of the old negro, as he stands trembling in the doorway. "Is my good young Miss wid'n?" he enquires, in the same whispering voice, holding his cap in his right hand.

"Reckon how ye bes be gwine out a dat afo'h Miss come. Yer miss don' lib in dis ouse." So saying, the girl is about to close the door in the old man's face, for he is ragged and dejected, and has the appearance of a "suspicious nigger without a master."

"Don' talk so, good gal; ye don' know dis old man,—so hungry,—most starved. I lub Miss Franconia. Tell she I'ze here," he says, in a supplicating tone, as the girl, regaining confidence, scrutinises him from head to foot with the aid of her lamp.

The servant is about to request he will come inside that she may shut out the storm. Frankone knows old Daddy Bob, —dat she do!" he reiterates, working his cap in his fingers. The familiar words have caught Franconia's ear; she recognises the sound of the old man's voice; she springs to her feet, as her heart gladdens with joy. She bounds

down the stairs, and to the door, grasps the old man's hand, as a fond child warmly grasps the hand of a parent, and welcomes him with the tenderness of a sister. "Poor—my poor old Daddy!" she says, looking in his face so sweetly, so earnestly, "where have you come from? who bought you? how did you escape?" she asks, in rapid succcession. Holding his hand, she leads him along the passage, as he tells her. "Ah, missus, I sees hard times since old mas'r lef' de plantation. Him an't how he was ven you dah." He views her, curiously, from head to foot; kisses her hand; laughs with joy, as he was wont to laugh on the old plantation.

"Faithful as ever, Daddy? You found me out, and came to see me, didn't you?" says Franconia, so kindly, leading him into a small room on the left hand of the hall, where, after ordering some supper for him, she begs he will tell her all about his wayfaring. It is some minutes before Bob can get an opportunity to tell Franconia that he is a fugitive, having escaped the iron grasp of the law to stand true to old mas'r. At length he, in the enthusiastic boundings of his heart, commences his story.

"Nigger true, Miss Franconia (he mumbles out) on'e gib 'im chance to be. Ye sees, Bob warn't gwine t' lef' old mas'r, nohow; so I gin 'em da slip when'e come t' takes 'em fo'h sell——"

"Then they didn't sell you, old Dad? That's good! that's good! And Daddy's cold and wet?" she interrupts, anxiously, telling the servant to get some dry clothes for him.

"I is dat, Miss Frankone. Han't ad nofin t' eat dis most two days," he returns, looking at her affectionately, with one of those simple smiles, so true, so expressive.

A supper is soon ready for Daddy, to which he sits down

as if he were about to renew all his former fondness and familiarity. "Seems like old times, don 'un, Miss Frankone? Wish old mas'r war here, too," says the old man, putting the bowl of coffee to his lips, and casting a side-look at the servant.

Franconia sits watching him intently, as if he were a child just rescued from some impending danger. "Don't mention my poor uncle, Daddy. He feels as much interest in you as I do; but the world don't look upon him now as it once did——"

"Neber mind: I gwine to work fo' old mas'r. It'll take dis old child to see old mas'r all right," replies the old man, forgetting that he is too old to take care of himself, properly. Bob finishes his supper, rests his elbow on the table and his head in his hand, and commences disclosing his troubles to Franconia. He tells her how he secreted himself in the pine-woods,—how he wandered through swamps, waded creeks, slept on trunks of trees, crept stealthily to the old mansion at night, listened for mas'r's footsteps, and watched beneath the veranda; and when he found he was not there, how he turned and left the spot, his poor heart regretting. How his heart beat as he passed the old familiar cabin, retracing his steps to seek a shelter in the swamp; how, when he learned her residence, famished with hunger, he wended his way into the city to seek her out, knowing she would relieve his wants.

"What vil da do wid me, spose da cotch me, Miss Frankone?" enquires the old man, simply, looking down at his encrusted feet, and again at his nether wardrobe, which he feels is not just the thing to appear in before young missus.

"They won't do anything cruel to you, Daddy. You are

too old; your grey hairs will protect you. Why, Daddy, you would not fetch a bid if they found out who owned you, and put you up at auction to-morrow," she says, with seeming unconsciousness. She little knew how much the old man prided in his value,—how much he esteemed the amount of good work he could do for master. He shakes his head, looks doubtingly at her, as if questioning the sincerity of her remark.

"Just get Daddy Bob (he mutters) a *badge*, den 'e show missus how much work in 'um."

"Franconia promises to comply with his request, and, with the aid of a friend, will intercede for him, and procure for him a badge, that he may display his energies for the benefit of old mas'r. This done, she orders the servant to show him his bed in one of the "yard houses;" bids the old man an affectionate good night, retires to her room, and watches the return of her truant swain.

There, seated in an arm-chair, she waits, and waits, and waits, hope and anxiety recording time as it passes. The servant has seen Daddy safe in his room, and joins her Missus, where, by the force of habit, she coils herself at her feet, and sleeps. She has not long remained in this position when loud singing breaks upon her ear; louder and louder it vibrates through the music of the storm, and approaches. Now she distinctly recognises the sharp voice of M'Carstrow, which is followed by loud rappings at the door of the basement hall. M'Carstrow, impatiently, demands entrance. The half-sleeping servant, startled at the noise, springs to her feet, rubs her eyes, bounds down the stairs, seizes the globular lamp, and proceeds to open the door. Franconia, a candle in her hand, waits at the top of the

stairs. She swings back the door, and there, bespattered with mud, face bleeding and distorted, and eyes glassy, stands the chivalrous M'Carstrow. He presents a sorry picture; mutters, or half growls, some sharp imprecations; makes a grasp at the girl, falls prostrate on the floor. Attempting to gain his perpendicular, he staggers a few yards—the girl screaming with fright—and groans as his face again confronts the tiles. To make the matter still worse, three of his boon companions follow him, and, almost in succession, pay their penance to the floor, in an indescribable catacomb.

"I tell you what, Colonel! if that nigger gal a' yourn don't stand close with her blazer we'll get into an all-fired snarl," says one, endeavouring to extricate himself and regain his upright. After sundry ineffectual attempts, surging round the room in search of his hat, which is being very unceremoniously transformed into a muff beneath their entangled extremes, he turns over quietly, saying, "There's something very strange about the floor of this establishment,—it don't seem solid; 'pears how there's ups and downs in it." They wriggle and twist in a curious pile; endeavour to bring their knees out of "a fix"—to free themselves from the angles which they are most unmathematically working on the floor. Working and twisting,—now staggering, and again giving utterance to the coarsest language,—one of the gentry (they belong to the sporting world) calls loudly for the colonel's little 'oman. Regaining his feet, he makes indelicate advances towards the female servant, who, nearly pale with fright, (a negro can look pale) runs to her mistress at the top of the stairs.

He misses the frightened maid, and seats himself on the

lowest step of the stairs. Here he delivers a sort of half-musical soliloquy, after the following: "Gentlemen! this kind a' thing only happens at times, and isn't just the square thing when yer straight; but (seein' how southern life will be so), when a body get's crooked what's got a wife what don't look to matters and things, and never comes to take care on a body when he's done gone, he better shut up shop. Better be lookin' round to see what he can scare up!"

Franconia holds the flaring light over the stairs: pale and death-like, she trembles with fear, every moment expecting to see them ascend.

"I see the colonel's 'oman! yander she is; she what was imposed on him to save the poverty of her folks. The M'Carstrows know a thing or two: her folks may crawl under the dignity of the name, but they don't shell under the dignity of the money—they don't!" says a stalwart companion, attempting to gain a position by the side of his fellow on the steps. He gives a leering wink, contorts his face into a dozen grimaces, stares vacantly round the hall (sliding himself along on his hands and knees), his glassy eyes inflamed like balls of fire. "It'll be all square soon," he growls out.

The poor affrighted servant again attempts (having descended the stairs) to relieve her master; but the crawling creature has regained his feet. He springs upon her like a fiend, utters a fierce yell, and, snatching the lamp from her hand, dashes it upon the tiles, spreading the fractured pieces about the hall. Wringing herself from his grasp, she leaves a portion of her dress in his bony hand, and seeks shelter in a distant part of the hall. Holding up

the fragment as a trophy, he staggers from place to place, making hieroglyphics on the wall with his fingers. His misty mind searches for some point of egress. Confronting (rather uncomfortably) hat stands, tables, porcelains, and other hall appurtenances, he at length shuffles his way back to the stairs, where, as if doubting his bleered optics, he stands some moments, swaying to and fro. His hat again falls from his head, and his body, following, lays its lumbering length on the stairs. Happy fraternity! how useful is that body! His companion, laying his muddled head upon it, says it will serve for a pillow. "E'ke—hum—spose 'tis so? I reckon how I'm some—ec! eke!—somewhere or nowhere; aint we, Joe? It's a funny house, fellers," he continues to soliloquise, laying his arm affectionately over his companion's neck, and again yielding to the caprice of his nether limbs.

The gentlemen will now enjoy a little refreshing sleep; to further which enjoyment, they very coolly and unceremoniously commence a *pot-pourri* of discordant snoring. This seems of grateful concord for their boon companions, who (forming an equanimity of good feeling on the floor) join in.

The servant is but a slave, subject to her owner's will; she dare not approach him while in such an uncertain condition. Franconia cannot intercede, lest his companions, strangers to her, and having the appearance of low-bred men, taking advantage of M'Carstsow's besotted condition, make rude advances. M'Carstrow, snoring high above his cares, will take his comfort upon the tiles.

"The servant is supplied with another candle, which, at Franconia's bidding, she places in a niche of the hall. It will supply light to the grotesque sleepers, whose lamp has gone out.

Franconia has not forgotten that M'Carstrow is her husband; she has not forgotten that she owes him a wife's debt of kindness. She descends the stairs gently, leans over his besotted body, smooths his feverish brow with her hand, and orders the servant to bring a soft cushion; which done, she raises his head and places it beneath—so gently, so carefully. Her loving heart seems swelling with grief, as compassionately she gazes upon him; then, drawing a cambric handkerchief from her bosom, spreads it so kindly over his face. Woman! there is worth in that last little act. She leaves him to enjoy his follies, but regrets their existence. Retiring to the drawing-room, agitated and sleepless, she reclines on a lounge to await the light of morning. Again the faithful servant, endeavouring to appease her mistress's agitation, crouches upon the carpet, resting her head on the ottoman at Franconia's feet.

The morning dawns bright and sunny: Franconia has not slept. She has passed the hours in watchfulness; has watched the negro sleeping, while her thoughts were riveted to the scene in the hall. She gets up, paces the room from the couch to the window, and sits down again undecided, unresolved. Taking Diana—such is the servant's name—by the hand, she wakes her, and sends her into the hall to ascertain the condition of the sleepers. The metamorphosed group, poisoning the air with their reeking breath, are still enjoying the morbid fruits of their bacchanalianism. Quietly, coolly, and promiscuously, they lay as lovingly as fellows of the animal world could desire.

The servant returns shaking her head. "Missus, da'h lays yander, so in all fixins dat no tellin' which most done

gone. Mas'r seems done gone, sartin!" says the servant, her face glowing with apprehension.

The significant phrase alarms Franconia. She repairs to the hall, and commences restoring the sleepers to consciousness. The gentlemen are doggedly obstinate; they refuse to be disturbed. She recognises the face of one whose business it is to reduce men to the last stage of poverty. Her sensitive nature shudders at the sight, as she views him with a curl of contempt on her lip. "Oh, M'Carstrow, —M'Carstrow!" she whispers, and taking him by the hand, shakes it violently. M'Carstrow, with countenance ghastly and inflamed, begins to raise his sluggish head. He sees Franconia pensively gazing in his face; and yet he inquires who it is that disturbs the progress of his comforts. "Only me!" says the good woman, soliciting him to leave his companions and accompany her.

"Oh, you, is it?" he replies, grumblingly, rising on his right elbow, and rubbing his eyes with his left hand. Wildly and vacantly he stares round the hall, as if aroused from a trance, and made sensible of his condition.

"Yes, me—simply me, who, lost to your affections, is made most unhappy——" Franconia would proceed, but is interrupted by her muddling swain.

"Unhappy! unhappy!" says the man of southern chivalry, making sundry irresistible nods. "Propagator of mischief, of evil contentions, of peace annihilators. Ah! ah! ah! Thinking about the lustre of them beggared relations. It always takes fools to make a fuss over small things: an angel wouldn't make a discontented woman happy." Franconia breaks out into a paroxysm of grief,

so unfeeling is the tone in which he addresses her. He is a southern gentleman,—happily not of New England in his manners, not of New England in his affections, not of New England in his domestic associations. He thinks Franconia very silly, and scouts with derision the idea of marrying a southern gentleman who likes enjoyment, and then making a fuss about it. He thinks she had better shut up her whimpering,—learn to be a good wife upon southern principles.

"Husbands should be husbands, to claim a wife's respect; and they should never forget that kindness makes good wives. Take away the life springs of woman's love, and what is she? What is she with her happiness gone, her pride touched, her prospects blasted?" What respect or love can she have for the man who degrades her to the level of his own loathsome companions?" (Franconia points to those who lie upon the floor, repulsive, and reeking with the fumes of dissipation.) "There are your companions," she says.

"Companions?" he returns, enquiringly. He looks round upon them with surprise. "Who are those fellows you have got here?" he enquires, angrily.

"You brought them to your own home; that home you might make happy——"

"Not a bit of it! They are some of your d——d disreputable relations."

"My relations never violate the conduct of gentlemen." "No; but they sponge on me. These my companions! (looking at them inquisitively). Oh, no! Don't let us talk about such things; I'ze got fifteen hundred dollars and costs to pay for that nigger gal you were fool

enough to get into a fit about when we were married. That's what I'ze got for my good-heartedness." M'Carstrow permits his very gentlemanly southern self to get into a rage. He springs to his feet suddenly, crosses and recrosses the hall like one frenzied with excitement. Franconia is frightened, runs up the stairs, and into her chamber, where, secreting herself, she fastens the door. He looks wistfully after her, stamping his foot, but he will not follow. Too much of a polished gentleman, he will merely amuse himself by running over the gamut of his strongest imprecations. The noise creates general alarm among his companions, who, gaining their uprights, commence remonstrating with him on his rude conduct, as if they were much superior beings.

"Now, colonel, major,—or whatever they dubbed ye, in the way of a title," says one, putting his hand to his hat, with a swaggering bow; "just stop that ar' sort a' nonsense, and pay over this 'ere little affair afore we gets into polite etiquette and such things. When, to make the expenses, ye comes into a place like ours, and runs up a credit score,—when ye gets so lofty that ye can't tell fifty from five, we puts a scaler on, so customers don't forget in the morning." The modest gentleman presents to Mr. Carstrow's astonished eyes a note for twenty-seven hundred dollars, with the genuine signature. M'Carstrow takes it in his hand, stares at it, turns it over and over. The signature is his; but he is undecided about the manner of its getting there, and begins to give expression to some doubt.

The gentleman watches M'Carstrow very cautiously. "Straight! colonel (he says) just turn out the shiners, or, to 'commodate, we'll let ye off with a sprinkling of niggers."

The colonel puts the fore-finger of his left hand to his

lips, and, with serious countenance, walks twice or thrice across the hall, as if consulting his dignity: "Shell out the niggers first; we'll take the dignity part a'ter," he concludes.

"I demand to know how you came in my house," interrupts the colonel, impatiently. He finds himself in very bad company; company southern gentlemen never acknowledge by daylight.

"We brought *you* here! Anything else you'd like to know? is the cool, sneering response. The gentleman will take a pinch of snuff; he draws his fancy box from his pocket, gives the cover a polite rap with his finger, invites the enraged M'Carstrow to "take." That gentleman shakes his head,—declines. He is turning the whole affair over in his head, seems taking it into serious consideration. Seriously, he accepted their accommodation, and now finds himself compelled to endure their painful presence.

"I, I, I—m, rather in doubt," stammers M'Carstrow, fingering the little obligation again, turning it over and over, rubbing his eyes, applying his glass. He sees nothing in the signature to dispute. "I must stop this kind of fishing," he says; "don't do. It 's just what friend Scranton would call very bad philosophy. Gentlemen, suppose you sit down; we'd better consider this matter a little. Han't got a dime in the bank, just now." M'Carstrow is becoming more quiet, takes a philosophical view of the matter, affects more suavity. Calling loudly for the negro servant, that personage presents herself, and is ordered to bring chairs to provide accommodation for the gentlemen, in the hall.

"Might just as well settle the matter in the parlour,

colonel; t'wont put you out a mite," the gambler suggests, with a laconic air. He will not trouble M'Carstrow by waiting for his reply. No; he leads the way, very coolly, asking no odds of etiquette; and, having entered the apartment, invites his comrades to take seats. The dignity and coolness with which the manœuvre is executed takes "Boss" M'Carstrow by surprise; makes him feel that he is merely a dependent individual, whose presence there is not much need of. "I tell you what it is, gents, I'ze shaved my accounts at the bank down to the smallest figure, have! but there's an honourable consideration about this matter; and, honour's honour, and I want to discharge it somehow—niggers or cash!" The gentlemen's feelings have smoothed down amazingly. M'Carstrow is entirely serious, and willing to comply.

The gentlemen have seated themselves in a triangle, with the "done over" colonel in the centre.

"Well, niggers will do just as well, provided they are sound, prime, and put at prices so a feller can turn 'em into tin, quick," says the gentleman, who elects himself spokesman of the party.

"Keeps my property in tall condition, but won't shove it off under market quotations, no how!" M'Carstrow interrupts, as the spokesman, affecting the nonchalance of a newly-elected alderman, places his feet upon the rich upholstery of a sofa close by. He would enjoy the extremes of southern comfort. "Colonel, I wish you had a more convenient place to spit," rejoins the gentleman. He will not trouble the maid, however—he let's fly the noxious mixture, promiscuously; it falls from his lips upon the soft hearth-rug. "It will add another flower to the expensive

thing," he says, very coolly, elongating his figure a little more. He has relieved himself, wondrously. M'Carstrow calls the servant, points to the additional wreath on the hearth-rug!

"All your nigger property as good-conditioned as that gal?" enquires the gentleman, the others laughing at the nicety of his humour. Rising from his seat very deliberately, he approaches the servant, lays his hand upon her neck and shoulders.

"Not quite so fast, my friend: d—n it, gentlemen, don't be rude. That's coming the thing a little too familiar. There is a medium: please direct your moist appropriations and your improper remarks in their proper places." The girl, cringing beneath the ruffian's hand, places the necessary receptacle at his feet.

The gentleman is offended,—very much offended. He thinks it beneath the expansion of his mind—to be standing on aristocratic nonsense! "Spit boxes and nigger property ain't the thing to stand on about haristocrats; just put down the dimes. Three bright niggers 'll do: turn 'em out."

"Three of my best niggers!" ejaculates the Colonel.

"Nothin' shorter! Colonel."

"Remember, gentlemen, the market price of such property. The demand for cotton has made niggers worth their weight in gold, for any purpose. Take the prosperity of our country into consideration, gentlemen; remember the worth of prime men. The tip men of the market are worth 1200 dollars."

"Might as well lay that kind a' financerin aside, Colonel. What's the use of living in a free country, where every man has a right to make a penny when he can, and talk so?

Now, 'pears to me t'ant no use a' mincing the matter; we might a' leaked ye in for as many thousands as hundreds. Seein' how ye was a good customer, we saved ye on a small shot. Better put the niggers out: ownin' such a lot, ye won't feel it! Give us three prime chaps; none a' yer old saw bones what ye puts up at auction when ther' worked down to nothin'."

M'Carstrow's powers of reasoning are quite limited; and, finding himself in one of those strange situations southern gentlemen so often get into, and which not unfrequently prove as perplexing as the workings of the peculiar institution itself, he seeks relief by giving an order for three prime fellows. They will be delivered up, at the plantation, on the following day, when the merchandise will be duly made over, as per invoice. Everything is according to style and honour; the gentlemen pledge their faith to be gentlemen, to leave no dishonourable loop-hole for creeping out. And now, having settled the little matter, they make M'Carstrow the very best of bows, desire to be remembered to his woman, bid him good morning, and leave. They will claim their property (three prime men), by the justice of a "free-born democracy."

M'Carstrow watches them from the house, moralising over his folly. They have gone! he turns from the sight, ascends the stairs, and repairs to meet his Franconia.

CHAPTER XXII

THE VICISSITUDES OF A PREACHER.

We left Harry, the faithful servant, whose ministerial functions had been employed in elevating the souls of Marston's property, being separated from his wife and sold to Mr. M'Fadden. M'Fadden is a gentleman (we do not impugn the name, in a southern sense) of that class—very large class—who, finding the laws of their own country too oppressive for their liberal thoughts, seek a republican's home in ours. It is to such men, unhappily, the vices of slavery are open. They grasp them, apply them to purposes most mercenary, most vile. The most hardened of foreigners—that essence of degraded outcasts,—may, under the privileges of slavery, turn human misery into the means of making money. He has no true affiliations with the people of the south, nor can he feel aught beyond a selfish interest in the prosperity of the State; but he can be active in the work of evil. With the foreigner (we speak from observation), affecting love of liberty at home, it would seem, only makes him the greater tyrant when slavery gives him power to execute its inhuman trusts. Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden is one of this description of persons; he will make a fortune in the South, and live a gentleman in the North—perhaps, at home on his own native Isle. Education he has

none; moral principle he never enjoyed,—never expects to. He is a tall, athletic man, nearly six feet two inches in height, with extremely broad stooping shoulders, and always walks as if he were meditating some speculation. His dress is usually of southern red-mixed homespun,—a dress which he takes much pride at wearing, in connection with a black brigand hat, which gives his broad face, projecting cheek-bones, and blunt chin, a look of unmistakeable sullenness. Add to this a low, narrow forehead, generally covered with thick tufts of matted black hair, beneath which two savage eyes incessantly glare, and, reader, you have the repulsive personification of the man. Mr. M'Fadden has bought a preacher,—an article with the very best kind of a soul,—which he would send to his place in the country. Having just sent the article to the rail-road, he stands in a neighbouring bar-room, surrounded by his cronies, who are joining him in a social glass, discussing the qualities of the article preacher. We are not favoured with the point at issue; but we hear Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden say, with great force,—"Preachers are only good property under certain circumstances; and if them circumstances ain't just so, it won't do to buy 'em. Old aristocrat rice planters may make a good thing or two on 'em, because they can make 'em regulate the cummin' a' their property, and make it understand what the Lord says about minding their masters." For his (Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden's) own part, he wouldn't give seven coppers for the thinking part of any property, having no belief in that fashionable way of improving its value. "My preacher has been nicely packed up and sent off in advance," he says, wiping his mouth with his coat sleeve, and smacking his lips, as he twirls his glass

upon the zinc counter, shakes hands with his friends (they congratulate him upon the good bargain in his Divine), and proceeds to the railroad depot. Harry has arrived nearly two hours in advance,—delivered in good condition, as stated in a receipt which he holds in his hand, and which purports to be from the baggage-master. "Ah! here you are," says M'Fadden, taking the paper from Harry's hand, as he enters the luggage-room. "Take good care on ye,—I reckon I will!" He looks down upon him with an air of satisfaction. The poor preacher — the soul-glowing property—is yet chained, hand and foot. He sits upon the cold floor, those imploring eyes swelling at the thought that freedom only awaits him in another world. M'Fadden takes a little flask from his breast pocket, and, with a motion of kindness, draws the cork, passes it to him. "It's whiskey!" he says; "take a drop—do ye good, old feller." Quietly the man passes it to his lips, and moistens his mouth. "No winking and blinking—it's tip-top stuff," enjoins M'Fadden; "don't get it every day."

Mr. M'Fadden will take a little himself. "Glad to find ye here, all straight!" he mutters, taking the flask from his mouth. He had returned the receipt to his property; and, having gratified his appetite a little, he begins to take a more perspective view of his theological purchase.

"Yes, master; I am here!" He again holds up his chained hands, drops his face upon his knees; as much as to say, be sure I am all safe and sound.

Looking at the receipt again, and then at his preacher, "Guess 'hain't made a bad rap on ye' to-day!" he ejaculates, taking out his pocket-book and laying away the precious paper as carefully as if it were a hundred dollar note.

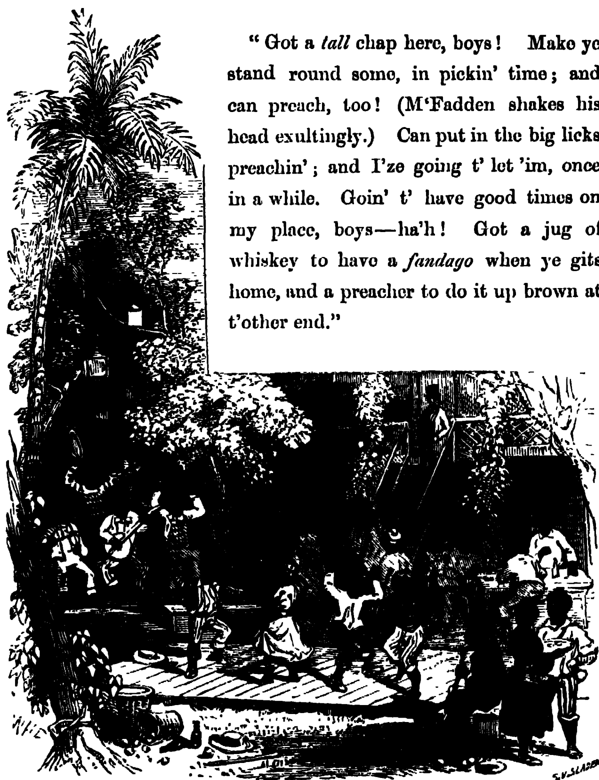
"Should like to have bought your old woman and young 'uns, but hadn't tin enough. And the way stock's up now, ain't slow! Look up here, my old buck! just put on a face as bright and smooth as a full moon—no sulkin'. Come along here."

The manacled preacher turns upon his hands, gets up as best he can (M'Fadden kindly assists by taking hold of his shoulder), and follows his purchaser to the platform,—like a submissive animal goaded to the very flesh, but chained, lest it make some show of resentment. "Good heap a' work in ye', old chuck; had a master what didn't understand bringing on't out, though!" mutters M'Fadden, as he introduces Harry to the negro car, at the same time casting a look of satisfaction at the brakeman standing at his left hand ready to receive the freight.

In the car (a dungeon-like box about ten feet square, the only aperture for admitting light being a lattice of about eight inches square, in the door), are three rough negro men and one woman, the latter apparently about twenty years of age.

"Got a *tall* chåp here, boys! Make ye stand round some, in pickin' time; and can preach, too. (M'Fadden shakes his head exultingly)! Can put in the big licks preachin'; and I'ze goin' t' let 'im, once in a while. Goin' t' have good times on my place, boys—ha'h! Got a jug of whiskey to have a *fandango* when ye gits home. Got it somewhere, I knows." Mr. M'Fadden exults over the happy times his boys have at home. He shakes himself all over, like a polar bear just out of the water, and laughs heartily. He has delivered himself of something that makes everybody else laugh; the mania has caught

PLATE IV.



"Got a *tall* chap here, boys! Make ye stand round some, in pickin' time; and can preach, too! (M'Fadden shakes his head exultingly.) Can put in the big licks preachin'; and I'ze going t' let 'im, once in a while. Goin' t' have good times on my place, boys—ha'h! Got a jug of whiskey to have a *fandago* when ye gits home, and a preacher to do it up brown at t'other end."

M'FADDEN AMUSES HIS PEOPLE WITH A FANDAGO.

upon his own subtle self. The negroes laugh in expressive cadences, and shrug their shoulders as Mr. M'Fadden continues to address them so sportively, so familiarly. Less initiated persons might have formed very satisfactory opinions of his character. He takes a peep under one of the seats, and with a rhapsody of laughter draws forth a small jug. "You can't come the smuggle over me, boys! I knew ye' had a shot somewhere," he exclaims. At his bidding, the woman hands him a gourd, from which he very deliberately helps himself to a stout draught.

"Sit down here!—Isaac, Abraham, Daniel, or whatever yer name is (Mr. M'Fadden addresses himself to his preacher). Ye'll get yer share on't when ye gits to my place." He sets the jug down, and passes the gourd back, saying: "What a saucy hussy ye are!" slapping the woman's black shoulder playfully. "Give him some—won't ye', boys?" he concludes.

Mr. M'Fadden (the cars are not yet ready to start, but the depôt is thronging with travellers, and the engine is puffing and snorting, as the driver holds his hand on the throttle, and the stoker crams with pitch pine knots the iron steed of fiery swiftness) will step out and take the comfort of his cigar. He pats his preacher on the shoulder, takes off his shackles, rubs his head with his hand, tells the boys to keep an eye on him. "Yes, mas'r," they answer, in tones of happy ignorance. The preacher must be jolly, keep on a bright face, never mind the old gal and her young 'uns, and remember what a chance he will have to get another. He can have two or more, if he pleases; so says his very generous owner.

Mr. M'Fadden shakes hands with his friends on the

platform, smokes his cigar leisurely, mingles with the crowd importantly, thinking the while what an unalloyed paragon of amiability he is. Presently the time-bell strikes its warning; the crowd of passengers rush for the cars; the whistle shrieks; the exhaust gives forth its gruff snorts, the connections clank, a jerk is felt, and onward bounds (mighty of power, but controlled by a finger's slightest touch) the iron steed, dragging its curious train of living merchandise.

M'Fadden again finds his way to the negroes' car, where, sitting down in front of his property, he will take a bird's-eye view of it. It is very fascinating to a man who loves the quality of such articles as preachers. He will draw his seat somewhat closer to the minister; his heart bounds with joy at the prime appearance of his purchase. Reaching out his hand, he takes the cap from Harry's head, throws it into the woman's lap; again rubs his hair into a friz. Thus relieved of his pleasing emotions, he will pass into one of the fashionable cars, and take his place among the aristocrats.

"Boss mighty funny when 'e come t' town, and git just so 'e don't see straight: wish 'e so good wen e out da'h on de plantation yander," ejaculates one of the negroes who answers to the name—Joe! Joe seems to have charge of the rest; but he watches M'Fadden's departure with a look of sullen hatred.

"Hard old Boss on time—an't he, boys?" enquires Harry, as an introduction to the conversation.

"Won't take ye long t' find 'um out, I reckon! Git nigger on de plantation 'e don't spa' him, nohow," rejoins another.

"Lor', man, if ye ain't tough ye'll git used up in no

time, wid him!" the woman speaks up, sharply. Then, pulling her ragged skirts around her, she casts a sympathising look at Harry, and, raising her hand in a threatening attitude, and shaking it spitefully in the direction M'Fadden has gone, says:—"If only had dat man, old Boss, where 'um could revenge 'um, how a' would make 'um suffer! He don' treat 'e nigger like 'e do 'e dog. If 'twarn't fo'h Buckra I'd cut 'e troat, sartin." This ominous expression, delivered with such emphasis, satisfies Harry that he has got into the hands of a master very unlike the kind and careless Marston.

Onward the cars speed, with clanking music making din the air. One of the negroes will add something to change the monotony. Fumbling beneath the seats for some minutes, he draws forth a little bag, carefully unties it, and presents his favourite violin. Its appearance gladdens the hearts of his comrades, who welcome it with smiling faces and loud applause. The instrument is of the most antique and original description. It has only two strings; but Simon thinks wonders of it, and would not swap it for a world of modern fiddles, what don't touch the heart with their music. He can bring out tremendous wailings with these two strings; such as will set the whole plantation dancing. He puts it through the process of tuning, adding all the scientific motions and twists of an Italian first-fiddling artiste. Simon will moisten its ears by spitting on them, which he does, turning and twisting himself into the attitudes of a pompous maestro. But now he has got it in what he considers the very nick of tune; it makes his face glow with satisfaction. "Jest—lef'—'um cum, Simon; big and strong!" says Joe,

beginning to keep time by slapping his hands on his knees. And such a sawing, such a scraping, as he inflicts, never machine of its kind, ancient or modern, got before. Simon and his companions are in ecstasies; but such cross-grained, such painful jingling of sounds! Its charm is irresistible with the negro; he mustn't lose a note of the tune; every creak is exhausted in a break-down dance, which the motion of the "Jim Crow" car makes more grotesque by every now and then jolting them into a huddle in one corner.

Mr. M'Fadden has been told that his property are having a lively time, and thinks he will leave his aristocratic friends, and go see to it; here he is followed by several young gentlemen, anxious to enjoy the hilarity of the scene.

"All my property,—right prime, isn't it?" says M'Fadden, exultingly, nudging one of the young men on the shoulder, as he, returning, enters the car. The gentleman nods assent, sits down, and coolly lights his cigar. "Good thing to have a fiddler on a plantation! I'd rather have it than a preacher; keeps the boys together, and makes 'um a deal better contented," he adds, beginning to exhale the fumes from his weed.

"Yes!—and ye sees, fellers, how I'ze bought a parson, too. Can do the thing up brown now, boys, I reckon," remarks the happy politician, slapping his professional gentleman on the knee, and laughing right heartily.

Turning to Harry with a firm look, he informs the gentlemen that "this critter's kind a' got the sulks, a'cos Romescos (he hates Romescos) has bought his wench and young 'uns. Take that out on him, at my place," he adds.

The dancing continues right merrily. One of the young

gentlemen would like to have the fiddler strike up "Down in Old Tennessee." The tune is sounded forth with all that warmth of feeling the negro only can add to the comical action of his body.

"Clar' the way; let the boys have a good time," says Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden, taking Harry by the arm and giving him a violent shake. He commands him to join in, and have a jolly good tune with the rest on 'em.

"Have no call for that, master. Let me act but the part of servant to you."

"Do you mean to come nigger sulks over this child?" interrupts M'Fadden, impatiently, scowling his heavy eyebrows, and casting a ferocious look at Harry. After ordering him to stow himself in a corner, he gets the others upon the floor, and compels them to shuffle what he calls a plantation "rip-her-up." The effect of this, added to the singular positions into which they are frequently thrown by the motion of the cars, affords infinite amusement.

"You see, gentlemen, there's nothing like putting the springs of life into property. Makes it worth fifty per cent. more; and then ye'll get the hard knocks out to a better profit. Old southerners spoil niggers, makin' so much on 'em; and soft-soapin' on 'um. That bit a' property's bin spiled just so (he points to Harry, crouched in the corner). And the critter thinks he can preach! Take that out on him with a round turn, when I git to my place," he continues.

Harry cares very little for M'Fadden's conversation; he sits as quietly and peaceably as if it had been addressed to some other negro. M'Fadden, that he may not be found wanting in his efforts to amuse the young gentlemen, reaches

out his hand to one of them, takes a cigar from his case, lights it, and proceeds to keep time by beating his hands on his knees.

The train is approaching the crossing where Mr. M'Fadden will discharge his property,—his human merchandise, and proceed with it some eleven miles on the high road. The noise created by the exuberance of feeling on the part of Mr. M'Fadden has attracted a numerous assemblage of passengers to the "Jim Crow" car. The conductor views this as violating the rules of the corporation; he demands it shall be stopped. All is quiet for a time; they reach the "crossing" about five o'clock P.M., where, to Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden's great delight, he finds himself surrounded by a promiscuous assembly of sovereign citizens, met to partake of the hospitalities offered by the candidate for the Assembly, who, having offered himself, expects the distinguished honour of being elected. The assembled citizens will hear what the learned man's going to talk about when he gets into the Assembly.

As Mr. M'Fadden is a great politician, and a greater democrat (we speak according to the southern acceptation) his presence is welcomed with an enthusiastic burst of applause. Shout after shout makes the very welkin ring, as his numerous friends gather round him, smile solicitously, shake him warmly by the hand, honour him as the peasantry honour the Lord of the Manor.

The crossing (one of those points so well known in the south) is a flat, wooded lawn, interspersed here and there with clumps of tall pine-trees. It is generally dignified with a grocery, a justice's office, and a tavern, where entertainment for man and beast may always be had. An

immense deal of judicial and political business "is put through a process" at these strange places. The squire's law-book is the oracle; all settlements must be made by it; all important sayings drawn from it. The squire himself is scarcely less an individual of mysterious importance; he draws settled facts from his copious volume, and thus saves himself the trouble of analysing them. Open it where he will, the whys and wherefores for every case are never wanting.

Our present crossing is a place of much importance, being where the political effervescence of the state often concentrates. It will not do, however, to analyse that concentration, lest the fungi that give it life and power may seem to conflict with the safety of law and order. On other occasions it might be taken for a place of rural quiet, instead of those indescribable gatherings of the rotten membranes of a bad political power.

Here the justice's office is attached to the grocery, a little shop in which all men may drink very deleterious liquor; and, in addition to the tavern, which is the chief building (a quadrangular structure raised a few feet from the ground on piles of the palmetto tree), there is a small church, shingled and clapboarded, and having a belfry with lattice-work sides. An upper and lower veranda surround the tavern, affording gentlemen an opportunity to enjoy the shade.

Several of Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden's friends meet him at the station, and, as he receives his property, assist him in securing it with irons preparatory to lodging it in a place of safe keeping.

"Goin' t' make this chap a deacon on my place; can

preach like sixty. It'll save the trouble sendin' north for such trash as they send us. Can make this feller truer on southern principles," says M'Fadden, exultingly, addressing himself to his companions, looking Harry smilingly in the face, and patting him on the shoulder. The gentlemen view Harry with particular admiration, and remark upon his fine points with the usual satisfaction of connoisseurs. Mr. M'Fadden will secure his preacher, in iron fellowship, to the left hand of the woman slave.

"All right!" he says, as the irons are locked, and he his property up to the tavern, where he meets mine host (a short, fat man, with a very red and good-natured face, who always dresses in brown clothes, smiles, and has an extra laugh for 'lection days), who stands his consequential proportions in the entrance to the lower veranda, and is receiving his customers with the blandest smiles. "I thinks a right smart *heap* on ye, or I would'nt a' 'gin ye that gal for a mate," continues M'Fadden, walking along, looking at Harry earnestly, and, with an air of self-congratulation, ejecting a quantity of tobacco-juice from his capacious mouth. "Mr. M'Fadden is very, very welcome;" so says mine host, who would have him take a social glass with his own dear self.

Mr. M'Fadden must be excused until he has seen the place in which to deposit his preacher and other property.

"A'h ha!" (mine host cants his ear, enquiringly): "want grits for 'em, I s'pose?" he returns, and his round fat face glows with satisfaction. "Can suit you to a shavin'."

"That's right, Colonel; I know'd ye could," ejaculates the other. Mine host is much elated at hearing his title appended. Colonel Frank Jones (such is mine host's

name) never fought but one duel, and that was the time when, being a delegate to the southern blowing-up convention, lately holden in the secession city of Charleston, he entered his name on the register of the Charleston Hotel—"Colonel Frank Jones, Esq., of the South Carolina Dragoons;" beneath which an impertinent wag scrawled—"Corporal James Henry Williamson M'Donal Cudgo, Esq. of the same regiment." Colonel Frank Jones, Esq. took this very gross insult in the highest kind of dudgeon, and forthwith challenged the impertinent wag to settle the matter as became gentlemen. The duel, however, ended quite as harmlessly as the blowing-up convention of which Mr. Colonel Frank Jones was a delegate, the seconds (thoughtless wretches) having forgot to put bullets in the weapons.

(Our readers must excuse us for digressing a little.) Mine host rubs his hands, draws his mouth into a dozen different puckers, and then cries out at the top of his voice, "Ho, boys, ho!"

Three or four half-clad negroes come scampering into the room, ready to answer the summons. "Take charge a' this property a' my friend's here. Get 'em a good tuck out a' grits."

"Can grind 'em themselves," interrupts M'Fadden, quickly. "About the price, Colonel?"

"That's all straight," spreading his hands with an accompanying nod of satisfaction: "'commodate ye with a first-rate lock-up and the grits at seven-pence a day."

"No objection." Mr. M'Fadden is entirely satisfied. The waiters take the gentleman's property in charge, and conduct it to a small building, an appropriate habitation of

hens and pigs. It was of logs, rough hewn, without chiuk-ing; without floor to keep Mr. M'Fadden's property from the ground, damp and cold. Unsuited as it is to the reception of human beings, many planters of great opulence have none better for their plantation people. It is about ten feet high, seven broad, and eleven long.

"Have a dandy time on't in here to-night," says Mr. M'Fadden, addressing himself to Harry, as one of the waiters unlocks the door and ushers the human property into its dreary abode. Mr. M'Fadden will step inside, to take a bird's-eye view of the security of the place. He entertains some doubts about the faith of his preacher, however, and has half an inclination to turn round as he is about making his exit. He will. Approaches Harry a second time; he feels his pockets carefully, and suggests that he has some mischievous weapon of liberty stowed away somewhere. He presses and presses his hands to his skirts and bosom. And now he knew he was not mistaken, for he feels something solid in the bosom of his shirt, which is not his heart, although that thing makes a deuce of a fluttering. Mr. M'Fadden's anxiety increases as he squeezes his hands over its shapes, and watches the changes of Harry's countenance. "Book, ha'h!" he exclaims, drawing the osnaburg tight over the square with his left hand, while, with his right, he suddenly grasps Harry firmly by the hair of the head, as if he has discovered an infernal machine. "Book, ha'h!"

"Pull it out, old buck. That's the worst a' learned niggers; puts the very seven devils in their black heads, and makes 'em carry their conceit right into nigger stubbornness, so ye have t' bring it out by lashin' and botherin'. Can't stand such nigger nonsense nohow."

Harry has borne all very peaceably; but there is a time when even the worm will turn. He draws forth the book,—it is the Bible, his hope and comforter; he has treasured it near his heart—that heart that beats loudly against the rocks of oppression. "What man can he be who feareth the word of God, and says he is of his chosen? Master, that's my Bible: can it do evil against righteousness? It is the light my burdened spirit loves, my guide—"

"Your spirit?" inquires M'Fadden, sullenly, interrupting Harry. "A black spirit, ye' mean, ye' nigger of a preacher. I didn't buy that, nor don't want it. 'Taint worth seven coppers in picking time. But I tell ye, cuff, wouldn't mind lettin' on ye preach, if a feller can make a *spec** on't." The gentleman concludes, contracting his eyebrows, and scowling at his property forbiddingly.

"You'll let me have it again when I gets on the plantation, won't ye, master?" inquires Harry, calmly.

"Let you have it on the plantation?" (Mr. M'Fadden gives his preacher a piercingly fierce look), "that's just where ye won't have 't. Have any kind a' song-book ye' wants; only larn 'em to other niggers, so they can put in the chorus once in a while. Now, old buck (I'm a man a' genius, ye know), when niggers get larnin' the Bible out a' ther' own heads, 't makes 'em sassy'r than ther's any calculatin' on. It just puts the very d—l into property. Why, deacon," he addresses himself to Harry with more complacency, "my old father—he was as good a father as ever came from Dublin—said it was just the spilin' on his children to larn 'em to read. See me, now! what larnin' I'ze

* Good profit.

got; got it all don't know how: cum as nat'ral as daylight. I've got the allfired'st sense ye' ever did see; and it's common sense what makes money. Yer don't think a feller what's got sense like me would bother his head with larnin' in this ar' down south?" Mr. M'Fadden exhibits great confidence in himself, and seems quite playful with his preacher, whom he pats on the shoulder and shakes by the hand. "I never read three chapters in that ar' book in my whole life—wouldn't neither. Really, deacon, two-thirds of the people of our State can't read a word out a' that book. As for larnin', I just put me mind on the thing, and got the meanin' out on't sudden."

Mr. M'Fadden's soothing consolation, that, as he has become such a wonderful specimen of mankind without learning, Harry must be a very dangerous implement of progress if allowed to go about the plantation with a Bible in his pocket, seems strange in this our Christian land. "Can fiddle just as much as yer mind t'," concludes Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden, as he again shakes the hand of his preacher, and proceeds to mingle with the political gathering, the Bible in his pocket.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOW WE MANUFACTURE POLITICAL FAITH.

MR. M'FADDEN enters the tavern, which presents one of those grotesque scenes so peculiarly southern, almost impossible for the reader to imagine, and scarcely less for pen to describe. In and around the verandas are numerous arm-chairs, occupied by the fashionable portion of the political material, who, dressed in extreme profuseness, are displaying their extraordinary distinctions in jewellery of heavy seals and long dangling chains. Some are young men who have enjoyed the advantage of a liberal education, which they now turn into the more genial duty of ornamenting themselves. They have spent much time and many valuable cosmetics on their heads, all of which is very satisfactorily repaid by the smoothness of their hair. Their pleasure never penetrated beyond this; they ask no more.

They ask but little of the world, and are discussing the all-important question, whether Colonel Mophany or General Vandart will get the more votes at the polls. So they smoke and harangue, and drink and swear, and with inimitable provincialisms fill up the clattering music. There is a fascinating piquancy in the strange slang and conversational intermixture. It is a great day at the crossing; the political sediment has reduced all men to

one grade, one harmonious whole, niggers excepted. Spirits that cannot flow one way must flow another.

In an adjoining room sit the two candidates—gentlemen of high distinction—for the votes of the sovereign people. Through those sovereign rights they will satisfy their yearning desire to reach the very high position of member of the general assembly. Anxiety is pictured on their very countenances; it is the fruit of care when men travel the road to distinction without finding it. They are well dressed, and would be modest, if modesty were worth its having in such an atmosphere. Indeed, they might have been taken for men with other motives than those of gaining office by wallowing in a political quagmire reeking with democratic filth. Courteous to each other, they sit at a large table containing long slips of paper, each candidate's sentiments printed thereon. As each voter (good fellow that he is) enters the room, one or the other candidate reaches out his hand to welcome him, and, as a sequel, hands him his slip, making the politest bow. Much is said about the prospects of the South, and much more that is very acceptable to those about to do the drinking part of the scene.

Both candidates are very ambitious men; both profess to be the people's champion—the sovereign people—the dear people—the noble-hearted people—the iron-handed, unbribable, unterrified democracy—the people from whom all power springs. The never-flinching, unterrified, irresistible democracy are smothered with encomiums of praise, sounding from all parts of the room. Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden is ushered into the room to the great joy of his friends: being a very great man among the loyal voters, his appearance produces great excitement.

Several friends of the candidates, working for their favourites, are making themselves very humble in their behalf. Although there is little care for maintaining any fundamental principle of government that does not serve his own pocket, Mr. M'Fadden can and will control a large number of votes, do a deal of knocking down at the poles, and bring up first-rate fighting men to do the keeping away the opposite's constituents. Thus our man, who has lately been bought as preacher, is most useful in this our little democratic world.

Some two or three hundred persons have collected near a clump of trees on the lawn, and are divided into knots intermixed with ruffian-looking desperadoes, dressed most coarsely and fantastically. They are pitting their men, after the fashion of good horses; then they boldly draw forth and expose the minor delinquencies of opposing candidates. Among them are the "*San-piters*," who affect an air of dignity, and scout the planter's offer of work so long as a herring runs the river; the "piny woods-man," of great independence while rabbits are found in the woods, and he can wander over the barren unrestrained; and the "Wire-Grass-Men;" and the Crackers,* who live anywhere and everywhere, and whom the government delights to keep in ignorance, while declaring it much better they were enslaved. The State possesses many thousands of these people; but few of them can read, while never having written a stroke in their lives is a boast. Continually armed with double-barrel guns, to hunt the panting buck is one of their sports; to torture a runaway negro is

* Singular species of gypsies, found throughout the State.

another; to make free with a planter's corn field is the very best. The reader may imagine this picture of lean, craven faces—unshaven and made fiercely repulsive by their small, treacherous eyes, if he can. It can only be seen in these our *happy* slave states of our happy Union.

The time draws near when the candidates will come forward, address the sovereign constituency, and declare their free and open principles—their love of liberal governments, and their undying affection for the great truths of democracy. The scene, as the time approaches, becomes more and more animated. All are armed to the teeth, with the symbol of honour (something so called), beneath their coarse doublets, or in the waistbands of their pantaloons. The group evinces so much excitement that belligerents are well nigh coming to blows; in fact, peace is only preserved by the timely appearance of the landlord, who proclaims that unless order be preserved until after the candidates have addressed them the next barrel of whiskey will positively "not be tapped." He could not use a more effectual argument. Mr. M'Fadden, who exercises great authority over the minions under him, at this announcement mounts the top of an empty whiskey barrel, and declares he will whip the "whole crowd," if they do not cease to wage their political arguments.

While the above cursory remarks and party sparrings are going on, some forty negroes are seen busily employed preparing the indispensable adjuncts of the occasion—the meats. Here, beneath the clump of trees, a few yards from the grocery and justices' office, the candidates' tables are being spread with cold meats, crackers, bread and cheese, cigars, &c., &c. As soon as the gentlemen candidates have deli-

vered themselves of their sentiments, two barrels of real "straight-back" whiskey will be added.

This is the way we puts our candidate through, down south, ye see, fellers, voters: it's we what's the bone and siners a' the rights a'the south. It's we what's got t' take the slow-coach politics out a' the hands a' them ar' old harristocrats what don't think them ar' northern abolitionists han't goin to do nothin. It's we, fellow citizens, what puts southern-rights principles clean through; it's we what puts them ar' old Union haristocrats, what spiles all the nigger property, into the straight up way a' doing things! Now, feller voters, free and independent citizens—freemen who have fought for freedom,—you, whose old, grey-headed fathers died for freedom! it takes you t' know what sort a thing freedom is; and how to enjoy it so niggers can't take it away from you! I'ze lived north way, know how it is! Yer jist the chaps to put niggers straight,—to vote for my man, Colonal Mohpany," Mr. M'Fadden cries out at the very top of his voice, as he comes rushing out of the tavern, edging his way through the crowd, followed by the two candidates. The gentlemen look anxiously good-natured; they walk together to the rostrum, followed by a crowd, measuring their way to the assembly through the darling affections of our free and independent voters. Gossamer citizenship, this!

As they reach the rostrum, a carriage is seen in the distance, approaching in great haste. All attention being directed to it, the first candidate, Colonel Mohpany, mounts the stump, places his right hand in his bosom, and pauses as if to learn who it brings. To the happy consolation of Mr. M'Fadden and his friends, it bears Mr. Scranton the

philosopher. Poor Mr. Scranton looks quite worn out with anxiety; he has come all the way from the city, prepared with the very best kind of a southern-rights speech, to relieve his friend, General Vardant, who is not accustomed to public declamation. The General is a cunning fellow, fears the stump accomplishments of his antagonist, and has secured the valuable services of philosopher Scranton. Mr. S. will tell the constituency, in very logical phraseology,—making the language suit the sentiments of his friends,—what principles must be maintained; how the General depends upon the soundness of their judgment to sustain him; how they are the bone and sinews of the great political power of the South; how their hard, uncontrastable appearance, and their garments of similar primitiveness, are emblematic of the iron firmness of their democracy. Mr. Scranton will further assure them that their democracy is founded on that very accommodating sort of freedom which will be sure to keep all persons of doubtful colour in slavery.

Mr. Scranton arrives, receives the congratulations of his friends, gets the negroes to brush him down, (for it is difficult to distinguish him from a pillar of dust,—save that we have his modest eyes for assurances,) takes a few glasses of moderate mixture, and coolly collects his ideas. The mixture will bring out Mr. Scranton's philosophical ideas: and, now that he has got his face and beard cleanly washed, he will proceed to the stand. Here he is received with loud cheering; the gentleman is a great man, all the way from the city. Sitting on a chair he is sorry was made at the north, he exhibits a deal of method in taking from his pocket a long cedar pencil, with which he will make notes of all Colonel Mohpany's loose points.

The reader, we feel assured, will excuse us for not following Colonal Mohpany through his speech, so laudatory of the patriotism of his friends, so much interrupted by applause. The warm manner in which his conclusion is received assures him that he now is the most popular man in the State. Mr. Scranton, armed with his usually melancholy countenance, rises to the stump, makes his modestly political bow, offers many impressive apologies for the unprepared state in which he finds himself, informs his hearers that he appears before them only as a substitute for his very intimate and particular friend, General Vardant. He, too, has a wonderful prolixity of compliments to bestow upon the free, the patriotic, the independent voters of the very independent district. He tries to be facetious; but his temperament will not admit of any inconsistencies, not even in a political contest. No! he must be serious; because the election of a candidate to so high an office is a serious affair. So he will tell the "San-pit men" a great deal about their noble sires; how they lived and died for liberty; how the tombstones of immortality are emblazoned with the glory of their glorious deeds. And he will tell these glorious squatters what inalienable rights they possess; how they must be maintained; and how they have always been first to maintain the principle of keeping "niggers" in their places, and resisting those mischievous propagators of northern villainy—abolitionists. He will tell the deep-thinking san-pit voters how it has been charged against them that they were only independent once a year, and that was when herrings run up the Santee river. Such a gross slander Mr. Scranton declares to be the most impious. They were always independent; and, if they were poor, and preferred to habit

themselves in primitive garbs, it was only because they preferred to be honest! This, Mr. Scranton, the northern philosopher, asserts with great emphasis. Yes! they are honest; and honest patriots are always better than rich traitors. From the saw-pit men, Mr. Scranton, his face distended with eloquence, turns to his cracker and "wire-grass" friends, upon whom he bestows most piercing compliments. Their lean mules (the speaker laughs at his own wit), and pioneer waggons always remind him of the good old times, when he was a boy, and everybody was so honest it was unnecessary even to have such useless finery as people put on at the present day. A word or two, very derogatory of the anti-slavery people, is received with deafening applause. Of the descendants of the Huguenots he says but little; they are few, rich, and very unpopular in this part of the little sovereign state. And he quite forgot to tell this unlettered mass of a sovereign constituency the true cause of their poverty and degradation. Mr. Scranton, however, in one particular point, which is a vital one to the slave-ocracy, differs with the ungovernable Romescos,—he would not burn all common schools, nor scout all such trash as schoolmasters.

In another part of Mr. Scranton's speech he enjoins them to be staunch supporters of men *known* to be firm to the South, and who would blow up every yankee who came south, and refused to declare his sentiments to be for concession. "You! (he points round him on the grotesque crowd) were first to take a stand and keep niggers down; to keep them where they can't turn round and enslave you! Great Britain, fellow citizens, (Mr. Scranton begins to wax warm; he adjusts his coat sleeves, and draws himself into a tragic attitude as he takes his tobacco from his mouth, seemingly

unconscious of his own enthusiasm), I say Great Britain ——" A sudden interruption is caused. Mr. Scranton's muddled quid, thrown with such violence, has bedaubed the cheek of an admiring saw-pitter, whose mind was completely absorbed in his eloquence. He was listening with breathless suspense, and only saved its admission in his capacious mouth by closing it a few seconds before.

"Sarved him just right; keep on, Colonel!" exclaims Mr. M'Fadden. He takes the man by the arm, pushes him aside, and makes a slight bow to Mr. Scranton. He would have him go on.

"Great Britain—feller citizens, I say—was first to commence the warfare against nigger slavery; and now she is joining the north to seek its permanent overthrow. She is a monster tyrant wherever she sets her foot—I say! (Three cheers for that.) She contributed to fasten the curse upon us; and now she wants to destroy us by taking it away according to the measures of the northern abolitionists—fanaticism! Whatever the old school southerner neglects to do for the preservation of the peculiar institution, we must do for him! And we, who have lived at the north, can, with your independent support, put the whole thing through a course of political crooks." Again Mr. Scranton pauses; surveys his assembly of free and independent citizens.

"That we can: I knows what fanatics down east be!" rejoins Mr. M'Fadden, shaking his head very knowingly. He laughs with an air of great satisfaction, as much as to say that, with such northern philosophers to do the championism of slavery in the south, all the commercial relations for which northern merchants are under so many obligations to slave-labour will be perfectly safe. But Mr. Scranton

has drawn out his speech to such an uncommon length, that the loquacious M'Fadden is becoming decidedly wearied. His eyes begin to glow languid, and the lids to close,—and now he nods assent to all Mr. Scranton's sayings, which singularly attracts the attention of that orator's hearers. The orator becomes very much annoyed at this, suddenly stops—begs Mr. M'Fadden will postpone his repose. This, from so great a man as Mr. Scranton, is accepted as provokingly witty. Mr. M'Fadden laughs; and they all laugh. The gentleman will continue his speech.

"The South must come out; must establish free trade, direct trade,—trade that will free her from her disreputable association with the North. She can do it!" Mr. Scranton wipes his forehead with his white pocket-handkerchief.

"Ain't we deeply indebted to the North?" a voice in the crowd cries out.

"Well! what if we are? Can't we offset the debts on the principles of war? Let it go against the injury of abolition excitements!" Mr. Scranton makes a theatrical flourish with his right hand, and runs the fingers of his left through his crispy hair, setting it on end like quills on a porcupine's back. Three long and loud cheers follow, and the gentleman is involuntarily compelled to laugh at his own singular sayings. "The South must hold conventions; she must enforce constitutional guarantees; she must plant herself in the federal capital, and plead her cause at the bar of the world. She will get a hearing there! And she must supplant that dangerous engine of abolition, now waging war against our property, our rights, our social system." Thus concluding, Mr. Scranton sits down, very much fatigued from his mental effervescence, yet much lighter from having

relieved himself of his speech, amidst a storm of applause. Such a throwing up of hats and slouches, such jostling, abetting, and haranguing upon the merits of the candidates, their speeches and their sentiments, never was heard or seen before.

Mine host now mounts the stand to make the welcome announcement, that, the speeches being over, the eating entertainments are ready. He hopes the friends of the candidates will repair to the tables, and help themselves without stint or restraint. As they are on the point of rushing upon the tables, Colonel Mohpany suddenly jumps up, and arrests the progress of the group by intimating that he has one word more to say. That word is, his desire to inform the bone and sinew of the constituency that his opponent belongs to a party which once declared in the Assembly that *they*—the very men who stand before him now—*were a dangerous class unless reduced to slavery!* The Colonel has scarcely delivered himself of this very clever charge, when the tables, a few yards distant, are surrounded by promiscuous friends and foes, who help themselves after the fashion most advantageous. All rules of etiquette are unceremoniously dispensed with,—he who can secure most is the best diplomatist. Many find their mouths so inadequate to the temptation of the feast, that they improve on Mr. Scranton's philosophy by making good use of their ample pockets. Believe us, reader, the entertainment is the essential part of the candidate's political virtue, which must be measured according to the extent of his cold meats and very bad whiskey.

To carry out the strength of General Vardant's principles, several of his opponent's friends are busily employed in cir-

culating a report that his barrel of whiskey has been "*brought on*" only half full. A grosser slander could not have been invented. But the report gains circulation so fast, that his meats and drinks are mischievously absorbed, and the demonstration of his unpopular position begins to be manifest. The candidates, unflinching in their efforts, mix with the medley, have the benefit of the full exercise of free thought and action, hear various opinions upon "the Squire's chances," and listen to the chiming of high-sounding compliments. While this clanging of merry jargon is at its highest, as if by some magic influence Romescos makes his appearance, and immediately commences to pit sides with Mr. M'Fadden. With all Romescos' outlawry, he is tenacious of his southern origin; and he will assert its rights against Mr. M'Fadden, whom he declares to be no better than a northern humbug, taking advantage of southern institutions. To him all northerners are great vagabonds, having neither principles nor humanity in their composition; he makes the assertion emphatically, without fear or trembling; and he calls upon his friends to sustain him, that he may maintain the rights of the South. Those rights Romescos asserts, and re-asserts, can only be preserved by southern men—not by sneaking northerners, who, with their trade, pocket their souls. Northerners are great men for whitewashing their faces with pretence! Romescos is received with considerable *éclat*. He declares, independently, that Mr. Scranton too is no less a sheer humbug of the same stripe, and whose humbugging propensities make him the humble servant of the south so long as he can make a dollar by the bemeaning operation. His full and unmeasured appreciation of all this northern-southern independence is here given to the world for the

world's good. And he wants the world to particularly understand, that the old southerner is the only independent man, the only true protector of humanity!

Romescos' sudden appearance, and the bold stand he takes against Mr. M'Fadden and his candidate, produce the utmost confusion; he being unpopular with the saw-pit men, with whom he once exhibited considerable dexterity in carrying off one of their number and putting the seal of slavery on him, they take sides against him. It is the Saw-pitters against Romescos and the Crackers. The spirits have flowed, and now the gods of *our* political power sway to and fro under most violent shocks. Many, being unable to keep a perpendicular, are accusing each other of all sorts of misdeeds—of the misdeeds of their ancestors—of the specific crimes they committed—the punishments they suffered. From personalities of their own time they descend forth into jeering each other on matters of family frailty, setting what their just deserts would have entitled them to receive. They continue in this strain of jargon for some time, until at length it becomes evident the storm of war is fast approaching a crisis. Mr. M'Fadden is mentally unprepared to meet this crisis, which Romescos will make to suit himself; and to this end the comical and somewhat tragical finale seems pretty well understood by the candidates and a few of the "swell-ocracy," who have assembled more to see the grand representation of physical power on the part of *these* free and enlightened citizens, than to partake of the feast or listen to the rhetoric of the speeches. In order to get a good view of the scene they have ascended trees, where, perched among their branches like so many jackals, they cheer and urge on the sport, as the nobility of Spain

applaud a favourite champion of the ring. At length the opposing parties doff their hats and coats, draw knives, make threatening grimaces, and twirl their steel in the air: their desperation is earnest; they make an onset, charging with the bravado of men determined to sacrifice life. The very air resounds with their shouts of blasphemy; blood flows from deep incisions of bowie-knives; garments are rent into shreds; and men seem to have betaken themselves to personating the demons.

Would that they were rational beings! would that they were men capable of constituting a power to protect the liberty of principle and the justice of law! Shout after shout goes up; tumult is triumphant. Two fatal rencontres are announced, and Mr. Lawrence M'Fadden is dangerously wounded; he has a cut in the abdomen. The poor victims attract but little attention; such little trifling affairs are very common, scarcely worth a word of commiseration. One gentleman insinuates that the affair has been a desperately amusing one; another very coolly adds, that *this* political feed has had much more interest in it than any preceding one.

The victims are rolled in blankets, and laid away in the corn-shed; they will await the arrival of the coroner, who, the landlord says, it will be no more than right to send for. They are only two dead Crackers, however, and nobody doubts what the verdict will be. In truth (and it must be told once in a while, even in our atmosphere), the only loss is the two votes, which the candidate had already secured with his meat and drink, and which have now, he regrets, been returned to the box of death instead of his ballot. Poor voters, now only fit to serve the vilest purpose! how degraded

in the scale of human nature is the being, only worth a suffrance at elections, where votes cast from impulse control the balance of power. Such beings are worth just nothing; they would not sell in the market. The negro waiters say, "It don't make a bit of matter how much white rubbish like this is killed, it won't fetch a bid in the market; and when you sell it, it won't stay sold."

"Lose I dat way, Cato, might jist as well take tousand dollar straight out a' masr's pocket; but dese critters b'nt notin' nohow," says old Daniel, one of the servants, who knows the value of his own body quite well. Daniel exults as he looks upon the dead bodies he is assisting to deposit in the corn-shed.

Mr. M'Fadden is carefully borne into the tavern, where, after much difficulty, he is got up stairs and laid on a very nice bed, spread with snowy white linen. A physician is called, and his wound dressed with all possible skill and attention. He is in great pain, however; begs his friends to bestow all care upon him, and save no expense.

Thus ends our political day. The process of making power to wield the social and political weal of our State closes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. M'FADDEN SEES SHADOWS OF THE FUTURE.

NIGHT has quickly drawn its curtain over the scene. Mr. M'Fadden lies on his bed, writhing under the pain of the poisoned wound. He left his preacher locked up for the night in a cold hovel, and he has secured the dangerous Bible, lest it lessen his value. Mr. M'Fadden, however, feels that now his earthly career is fast closing he must seek redemption. He has called in the aid of a physician, who tells him there is great danger, and little hope unless his case takes a favourable turn about midnight. The professional gentleman merely suggests this, but the suggestion conveys an awful warning. All the misdeeds of the past cloud before his eyes; they summon him to make his peace with his Maker. He remembers what has been told him about the quality of mercy,—the duration of hope in redemption,—which he may secure by rendering justice to those he has wronged. But now conscience wars with him; he sees the fierce elements of retribution gathering their poisoned shafts about him; he quails lest their points pierce his heart; and he sees the God of right arraigning him at the bar of justice. There, that Dispenser of all Good sits in his glory and omnipotence, listening while the oppressed recites his sufferings: the oppressed there meets him face to face, robed in that same garb of submission which

he has inflicted upon him on earth. His fevered brain gives out strange warnings,—warnings in which he sees the angel of light unfolding the long list of his injustice to his fellow man, and an angry God passing the awful sentence. Writhing, turning, and contorting his face, his very soul burns with the agony of despair. He grasps the hand of his physician, who leans over his wounded body, and, with eyes distorted and glassy, stares wildly and frantically round the room. Again, as if suffering inward torture, he springs from his pillow, utters fierce imprecations against the visions that surround him, grasps at them with his outstretched fingers, motions his hand backward and forward, and breaks out into violent paroxysms of passion, as if struggling in the unyielding grasp of death.

That physical power which has so long borne him up in his daily pursuits yields to the wanderings of his haunted mind. He lays his hand upon the physician's shoulder as his struggles now subside, looks mournfully in his face, and rather mutters than speaks: "Bring—bring—bring him here: I'll see him,—I must see him! I—I—I took away the book; there's what makes the sting worse! And when I close my eyes I see it burning fiercely——"

"Who shall I bring?" interrupts the physician, mildly, endeavouring to soothe his feelings by assuring him there is no danger, if he will but remain calm.

"Heaven is casting its thick vengeance round me; heaven is consuming me with the fire of my own heart! How can I be calm, and my past life vaulted with a glow of fire? The finger of Almighty God points to that deed I did to-day. I deprived a wretch of his only hope: that wretch can forgive me, before heaven. Y-e-s, he can,—can speak

for me,—can intercede for me; he can sign my repentance, and save me from the just vengeance of heaven. His—his—his———"

"What?" the physician whispers, putting his ear to his mouth. "Be calm."

"Calm!" he mutters in return.

"Neither fear death nor be frightened at its shadows—"

"It's life, life, life I fear—not death!" he gurgles out. "Bring him to me; there is the Bible. Oh! how could I have robbed him of it! 'Twas our folly—all folly—my folly!" Mr. M'Fadden had forgot that the bustle of current life was no excuse for his folly; that it would be summed up against him in the day of trouble. He never for once thought that the Bible and its teachings were as dear to slave as master, and that its truths were equally consoling in the hour of death. In life it strengthens man's hopes; could it have been thus with M'Fadden before death placed its troubled sea before his eyes, how happy he would have died in the Lord!

The emphatic language, uttered in supplicating tones, and so at variance with his habits in life, naturally excited the feelings of his physician, whose only solicitude had been evinced in his efforts to save life,—to heal the wound. Never had he watched at a patient's bed-side who had exhibited such convulsions of passion,—such fears of death.

Now struggling against a storm of convulsions, then subsiding into sluggish writhings, accompanied with low moans, indicating more mental disquietude than bodily pain. Again he is quiet; points to his coat.

The physician brings it forward and lays it upon the bed, where Mr. M'Fadden can put his hand upon it. "It is

there—in there!" he says, turning on his left side, and with a solicitous look pointing to the pockets of his coat. The professional gentleman does not understand him.

He half raises himself on his pillow, but sinks back fatigued, and faintly whispers, "Oh, take it to him—to him! Give him the comforter: bring him, poor fellow, to me, that his spirit may be *my* comforter!"

The physician understands, puts his hand into the pocket; draws forth the little boon companion. It is the Bible, book of books; its great truths have borne Harry through many trials,—he hopes it will be his shield and buckler to carry him through many more. Its associations are as dear to him as its teachings are consoling in the days of tribulation. It is dear to him, because the promotings of a noble-hearted woman secretly entrusted it to his care, in violation of slavery's statutes. Its well-worn pages bear testimony of the good service it has done. It was Franconia's gift (Franconia, whose tender emotions made her the friend of the slave), made in the kindness of woman's generous nature. The good example, when contrasted with the fierce tenor of slavery's fears, is worthy many followers.

But men seldom profit by small examples, especially when great fears are paramount.

The physician, holding the good book in his hand, enquires if Mr. M'Fadden would have him read from it? He has no answer to make, turns his feverish face from it, closes his eyes, and compressing his forehead with his hands, mutely shakes his head. A minute or two pass in silence; he has re-considered the point,—answers, no! He wants Harry brought to him, that he may acknowledge his crimes; that he may quench the fire of unhappiness burning within him.

"How seldom we think of death while in life,—and how painful to see death while gathering together the dross of this worldly chaos? Great, great, great is the reward of the good, and mighty is the hand of Omnipotence that, holding the record of our sins, warns us to prepare." As Mr. M'Fadden utters these words, a coloured woman enters the room to enquire if the patient wants nourishment. She will wait at the door.

The physician looks at the patient; the patient shakes his head and whispers, "Only the boy. The boy I bought to-day." The Bible lays at his side on the sheet. He points to it, again whispering, "The boy I took it from!"

The boy, the preacher, Mr. M'Fadden's purchase, can read; she will know him by that; she must bring him from the shed, from his cold bed of earth. That crime of slavery man wastes his energies to make right, is wrong in the sight of heaven; our patient reads the glaring testimony as the demons of his morbid fancy haunt him with their damning terrors, their ghastly visages.

"Go, woman, bring him!" he whispers again.

Almost motionless the woman stands. She has seen the little book—she knows it, and her eyes wander over the inscription on the cover. A deep blush shadows her countenance; she fixes her piercing black eyes upon it until they seem melting into sadness; with a delicacy and reserve at variance with her menial condition, she approaches the bed, lays her hand upon the book, and, while the physician's attention is attracted in another direction, closes its pages, and is about to depart.

"Can you tell which one he wants, girl?" enquires the physician, in a stern voice.

"His name, I think, is Harry; and they say the poor thing can preach; forgive me what I have done to him, oh Lord! It is the weakness of man grasping the things of this world, to leave behind for the world's nothingness," says Mr. M'Fadden, as the woman leaves the room giving an affirmative reply.

The presence of the Bible surprised the woman; she knew it as the one much used by Harry, on Marston's plantation. It was Franconia's gift! The associations of the name touched the chord upon which hung the happiest incidents of her life. Retracing her steps down the stairs, she seeks mine host of the tavern, makes known the demand, and receives the keys of this man-pen of our land of liberty. Lantern in hand, she soon reaches the door, unlocks it gently, as if she expects the approach of some strange object, and fears a sudden surprise.

There, the poor dejected wretches lay; nothing but earth's surface for a bed,—no blanket to cover them. They have eaten their measure of corn, and are sleeping; they sleep while chivalry revels! Harry has drawn his hat partly over his face, and made a pillow of the little bundle he carried under his arm.

Passing from one to the other, the woman approaches him, as if to see if she can recognise any familiar feature. She stoops over him, passes the light along his body, from head to foot, and from foot to head. "Can it be our Harry?" she mutters. "It can't be; master wouldn't sell him." Her eyes glare with anxiety as they wander up and down his sleeping figure.

"Harry,—Harry,—Harry! which is Harry?" she demands.

Scarcely has she lisped the words, when the sleeper starts to his feet, and sets his eyes on the woman with a stare of wonderment. His mind wanders—bewildered; is he back on the old plantation? That cannot be; they would not thus provide for him there. "Back on the old home! Oh, how glad I am: yes, my home is there, with good old master. My poor old woman; I've nothing for her, nothing," he says, extending his hand to the woman, and again, as his mind regains itself, their glances become mutual; the sympathy of two old associates gushes forth from the purest of fountains,—the oppressed heart.

"Harry—oh, Harry! is it you?"

"Ellen! my good Ellen, my friend, and old master's friend!" is the simultaneous salutation.

"Sold you, too?" enquires Harry, embracing her with all the fervour of a father who has regained his long-lost child. She throws her arms about his neck, and clings to him, as he kisses, and kisses, and kisses her olive brow.

"My sale, Harry, was of little consequence; but why did they sell you? (Her emotions have swollen into tears). You must tell me all, to-night! You must tell me of my child, my Nicholas,—if master cares for him, and how he looks, grows, and acts. Oh, how my heart beats to have him at my side;—when, when will that day come! I would have him with me, even if sold for the purpose." Tears gush down her cheeks, as Harry, encircling her with his arm, whispers words of consolation in her ear.

"If we were always for this world, Ellen, our lot could not be borne. But heaven has a recompense, which awaits us in the world to come. Ellen! (he holds her from him and looks intently in her face) masters are not to blame for our

sufferings,—the law is the sinner! Hope not, seek not for common justice, rights, privileges, or anything else while we are merchandise among men who, to please themselves, gamble with our souls and bodies. Take away that injustice, Ellen, and men who now plead our unprofitableness would hide their heads with shame. Make us men, and we will plead our own cause; we will show to the world that we are men; black men, who can be made men when they are not made merchandise." Ellen must tell him what has brought her here, first! He notices sad changes in her countenance, and feels anxious to listen to the recital of her troubles.

She cannot tell him now, and begs that he will not ask her, as the recollection of them fills her heart with sorrow. She discloses the object of her mission, will guide him to his new master, who, they say, is going to die, and feels very bad about it. He was a desperate man on his plantation, and has become the more contrite at death's call. "I hope God will forgive him!"

"He will!—He will! He is forgiving," interrupts Harry, hurriedly. "It's a pity master should feel bad before he has made money enough to feel like a Christian."

Ellen reconnoitres the wearied bodies of the others as they lie around. "Poor wretches! what can I do for them?" she says, holding the lamp over them. She can do but little for them, poor girl. The will is good, but the wherewith she hath not. Necessity is a hard master; none know it better than the slave woman. She will take Harry by the hand, and, retracing her steps, usher him into the presence of the wounded man. Pressing his hand as she opens the door, she bids him good

night, and retires to her cabin. "Poor Harry!" she says, with a sigh.

The kind woman is Ellen Juarne. She has passed another eventful stage of her eventful life. Mine host, good fellow, bought her of Mr. O'Brodereque, that's all!

END OF VOL. I.

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